

GOODLY WORDS

Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that
I would keep Thy words. (Psa. cxix. 57.)

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GOODLY WORDS.

THE MAN OF GOD—ELISHA.

No. 4.

(2 KINGS 8.)

IN the early verses of chapter 8 the Shunammite once again comes before us in relation to the man of God.

Counselled by him she had escaped the distress attendant upon the famine, but had lost her house and her land, and now she goes to the king to claim them again.

The woman in this way brings before us a picture of God's dealings with Israel. It is a time of famine with them, and they are deprived of everything and are sojourning in the land of the Philistine. The day is coming when they will discover that God has preserved all for them, and when they enter upon the enjoyment of houses and land once again God will deal bountifully with them, and full restoration to all the fruits of the field since they left the land will be His compensation for the years of affliction through which they have passed.

Gehazi also again comes before us. The sin of covetousness had separated him from Elisha and he is now found in the king's presence. He had risen in the world! He can speak of the work of God by the hand of Elisha, but *there is no present testimony,* it is but a recalling of what had transpired years

B

before. How many there are like this who can speak of the works of God, while all the time they are out of touch with God and with His people, and having secured a position in the world know nothing of the word God has *at the moment* for His people.

Can we not learn from this that for a Christian to seek and to secure a place in the world and there to speak of the works of God in the past is not our true and proper sphere of service, although God in His sovereignty may deign to make use of us.

As another has well said, "For a Christian to rise in the world, and entertain the world with the mighty works of God, is to fall very deeply."

In verse 7 Elisha is found at Damascus, and word is brought to the king of Syria, "The man of God is come hither." The readiness of the king to send to Elisha suggests the thought that Naaman *must* have spoken well of him and that his testimony had not been without effect. How wonderfully does God work so that His message may come to those He intends it shall reach ; distance and difficulties all disappear when God has gone before His servant. To the inquiry of Ben-hadad Elisha says, "Go, say unto him, Thou *mayest* certainly recover," but Hazael's answer when the king said, "What said Elisha to thee ?" is "He told me that thou *shouldest* surely recover."

In verse 11 we read the words, "And the man of God wept." There was a pretence of grief on the part of Hazael when Elisha spoke of the death of Ben-hadad, but it was simulated. The tears of the man of God were an outward expression of his deep, true sorrow of heart at the prospect of the calamities this man was about to bring upon Israel. The man of God feels things with God, and is not ashamed to weep

over all the evil that has come upon God's heritage, feeling that an enemy hath done this.

We cannot but recall the tears of the Lord Jesus. How pathetic is the scene in Luke 19. 41-44. How touching would be the plaint, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" Well might the Lord with sorrow of heart say, "Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." With what deep feeling the Lord would speak the words of Luke 23. 28, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold . . ." Think, too, of the beloved apostle in Acts 20 recognising the evil that was coming in amongst the saints at Ephesus, saying, "Remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears;" again in his tender solicitude for the Corinthians he says, "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you"; and then in Philippians 3. 18, speaking of the walk of those who mind earthly things, he says, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

We should not be unaffected by the sorrowful state and condition of things prevailing amongst the people of God, but like the apostle cease not to warn every one in the spirit of Jeremiah (chap. 13. 15-17) when he said, "Hear ye, and give ear . . . *for the Lord hath spoken.* Give glory to the Lord your God, *before* he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains. . . . But if ye will not hear it,

my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride ; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive." Do not let us turn aside from the things that belong to our peace.

Hazael professed to be very indignant at the prediction of the man of God and says, "But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing ? " And the quiet dignity of Elisha's answer is very striking, "The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." The last word is ever with the Lord and with His servants.

J. R. T.

Page 2'

THE BIBLE—THE BOOK OF RUTH.

THE Book of Ruth has a very remarkable place in scripture ; its chief feature is that it introduces *David* to us, though his name is only mentioned in the last chapter.

Ruth was a Gentile and one of a nation whom God had specifically debarred from entering His congregation. (Deut. 23. 3.) It is all the more striking, therefore, that Ruth's name should appear in the royal genealogy of Messiah which is given to us in Matthew's gospel. (Chap. 1. 5.) No flesh may glory in God's presence. And lest there should be any attempt to this human boasting, God in His infinite wisdom sovereignly selects Ruth as also others (see vers. 3 and 6) to be links in the chain of the genealogy of Christ according to the flesh. Only what is of moral worth is of account to God, and the features seen in Ruth shew us how fittingly she can be named in Matthew 1.

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

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The many moral lessons of the Book of Ruth demand that we should look a little in detail at its contents.

Naomi, an Israelite, is a true picture of an unsatisfied heart. She aptly illustrates a backslider, leaving, with her husband Elimelech, the true place of God's people, the land of Israel, and going to the land of Moab. (Chap. 1. 1-5.) There are believers to-day who, when their hearts are unhappy and spiritual famine is experienced, instead of turning to God and inquiring the cause of the condition, leave the company of God's people (in heart if not actually) and settle down in their family joys or the pleasures of the world. "Moab" is a picture of this.

God loves us too much to allow us to remain thus. Hence His hand of discipline is on Naomi. Her husband dies and then her two sons are also taken, and a famine follows. There was not much for Naomi's heart in such circumstances. Meanwhile, God is blessing His people and Naomi hears of it. Orpah remains in Moab, but Ruth shews interest. She is drawn to Naomi and her God and her people. What a rebuke to our hearts that God sometimes uses us even when we are away from Him.

Ruth is the one who now is of interest to us. (Chap. 2.) By the kind overruling hand of God Ruth is led to glean in one of the fields of Boaz, who was "a mighty man of wealth," and one of Naomi's kindred, or relations.

If we regard Boaz as a type of Christ, how deeply instructive all this becomes! And what suggestion to our hearts of the care and interest the Lord takes in our souls. Everything is done to encourage Ruth to keep near to Boaz.

GOODLY WORDS.

Do we not sometimes glean in other fields ? (Chap. 2. 8.) Are the books we read helping us to keep near Christ ? Do they feed us with real and good food ? "It is good that they meet thee not in any other field" was said to Ruth. What a question verse 19 contains ! "Where hast thou gleaned to-day ?" If our hearts seek the company of those following Christ and serving Him many "handfuls of purpose" shall we gather up." (Chap. 2. 16.) Then, too, we need to winnow it out ; that is by exercise of heart to develop what has been brought before our minds.

Boaz was one who had the "right of redemption" with regard to Ruth. When an Israelite became poor, a relative could redeem him from his state of need and replace him in his inheritance, his homestead or farm. If the case was that of a widow with no children it was necessary that the rich kinsman should marry the desolate and poor relative and the first child should succeed to the name of the previous husband. (See Lev. 25. 25-55 ; Deut. 25. 5-10.)

Ruth had a nearer kinsman than Boaz ; but circumstances prevented him availing himself of the privilege in regard of Ruth. This suggests how the law was powerless to reinstate us. Our weakness made the law weak : "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." (Rom. 8. 3.) But in Boaz there was strength.

With holy and beautiful simplicity we are told how Ruth's case fully comes to the knowledge of Boaz.

I wonder if Christ could say of us what Boaz says of Ruth, that she followed no other ? (Chap. 3. 10.) Alas ! the world in its varied forms so often attracts the heart. But if only Christ is before us, we shall know His tender support and prove that under His

A WORD IN SEASON.

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influence we spiritually bring forth fruit to God.
(Rom. 7. 4.)

There are very many more interesting details which may be noted in this precious Book of Ruth ; the few remarks which I have made may serve to begin the subject for some of my young readers.

M. W. B.

A WORD IN SEASON.

"*When the hour was come*, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him." (Luke 22. 14.)

TWO affectionate appeals made in recent years by honoured servants of the Lord, both now with Him, are here recorded as worthy of earnest consideration.

On one occasion beloved W. J., after speaking tenderly of the suffering love of Christ and of His *sacrifice* for us, raised the question of our response to that love, as expressed in our conduct. He then asked :

"Do you love the Lord Jesus ?

"How much do you love Him ?

"Do you love Him sufficiently to cause you to come to the meetings *in good time* ? "

* * * * *

The other instance was when beloved R. D., referring to those who "watch over our souls as those that shall give account that they may do this with joy and not groaning," said :

"One feels how laxity on the part of some puts groans on the hearts of those who care.

"Carelessness, indifference to the Lord's interests,

coming late to the meetings, puts groanings of shame on the part of those that care.

"In the city of Philippi was a meeting well tuned—a meeting in the enjoyment of heavenly things, in full sympathy Godward and in the testimony to man in the gospel. I do not think they came late to the meetings there!"

* * * * *

Habitual unpunctuality must surely be an indication of spiritual indifference to what is due to the Lord Jesus and to His own.

He knows, however, whether it is circumstances over which we have no control, or whether it is lack of affectionate consideration for Him and His people, that is the cause of the lateness.

May the Lord give us grace to give heed to these words of exhortation. (CONTRIBUTED.)

THE HINDRANCE.—A PRAYER.

THE MUSINGS OF A YOUNG PILGRIM.
PART III.

(Written January, 1923.)

LORD, shew me the thing that stands in the way
The stone that is under the wheel,
Reveal the idol to be cast down,
Lord, hear me as I kneel.

And, Lord, if I have not the strength to cut off
The part that offendeth me,
Nor have I the courage to overthrow
The thing I love more than Thee :

Oh ! cripple the limb with a touch of Thy hand,
To bear it give me grace,
And when I awake to-morrow morn
May the idol be on its face

“ SONS OF THE BRIDECHAMBER.”

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But more than this, I would ask, O Lord,
Smash it to powder fine,
Then fill up my heart with Thy wondrous love,
Making my face to shine. Amen.

“ SONS OF THE BRIDECHAMBER.”

(LUKE 5. 27-35, NEW TRANS.)

THE thought that believers are regarded as friends of Christ is familiar to many hearts, even amongst those who are perhaps little exercised as to what is becoming to those who claim the connection. Yet the Lord speaks in the following terms to His friends : “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

Companionship with the Lord is a less familiar thought ; but it is especially precious in this, that the question of faithfulness on our part is not so obvious a consideration as it is in friends. Many friends may not be in the intimacy of companionship ; we may recall, for example, that Judas was counted amongst the “*friends*.” It is a matter of supreme favour that any should be regarded as companions of the Lord.

The context in which the term companion stands in Hebrews 1 is calculated to impress every thoughtful soul. The throne of the kingdom having been established in a Man, and that Man being saluted as God by God Himself, the glorious Person is anointed with the oil—not of majesty and authority merely, but of *gladness* above His companions. The point is to emphasise His personal glory, when presented in Manhood, and it is in these conditions that His

people are seen in association with Him as His companions.

As further illustrating this wonderful theme, we see Him as Son of man (Heb. 2) crowned with glory and honour, anticipating headship over all things in the world to come; and in chapter 3 He is seen as Son over God's house. In these two connections also His people stand associated with Him; in the first, as "sons" and "brethren," and in the second as those who constitute the house.

So that the positions in which divine grace has set true believers, in the present period, are those of friends, companions, sons, brethren, and those in the midst of whom God will eternally dwell.

Returning to the thought of companionship, we may go a step farther, and suggest that the term "sons of the bridechamber" conveys a sweeter and more intimate thought even than that of companionship. Ordinarily, in conditions from which the figure is drawn, all companions might not be in the bridegroom's confidence, as to his tastes, plans, prospects, joys and anticipations; but in the place of nearness which, say, John had, "in the bosom of Jesus," there are no reserves; and this is the place and the state available to His own now. *He died* in order that we might be thus near Him. There is just one step beyond that! Do we know the bliss which the bride is privileged to enjoy? In such a state our inmost yearnings truly say, "Come."

The expression heading this article is found towards the close of Luke 5, and in that remarkable chapter we read of certain actions and movements of the Lord, which are usually taken up in a disconnected way. We suggest that, on the contrary, they form a

series of incidents, according as the Holy Spirit presents things in Luke (that is, in moral order, chap. 1. 3), leading up to the situation in which the Lord speaks of Himself as the Bridegroom. The series begins with Peter's acknowledgment of his ruin; it ends with seeing that Christ is all.

Peter was made to feel himself “a sinful man”; yet Jesus said to him, “Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt be catching men”; and he voluntarily followed, not here having been told to do so. The next scene is the cleansing of the leper; then the pardoning of the paralytic; next, the healing of his infirmity; and fifthly, the call of Levi, which involved no small strain upon a man whose determination, naturally, would be to make what profit he could, justly or unjustly, out of his occupation as tax-gatherer. A divinely gracious Man had crossed the vision of his soul, and revolutionised all his thoughts. In the estimate formed by a renewed heart, his gold, in comparison with Christ, became as tinsel; “and having left all, rising up, he followed him.”

It imposes no strain upon a mind taught of God to view these five incidents connectedly, and see in them successive stages of each believer's soul-history. Each exercise is thus preparation for the next; and all results in a cumulative total effect. Thus every true believer experiences conviction of sin, cleansing, pardon, deliverance, and the power of an all satisfying Object—the effect of each divinely wrought exercise remaining.

Together with the administration of blessing to men through those exercises, we are also privileged to behold successive glories of the Lord Jesus, namely, His abounding grace, which would fill the net of a

sinful man with fishes ; His ability to cleanse from all defilement, and in a manner so full of sympathy as led Him to touch a leper in effecting it ; then He graciously pardoned sins, and manifested His authority on earth to do so, by enabling the paralytic to carry his bed. He thus silenced the Pharisees and doctors, there probably to criticise, while the same grace and power were present to *heal even them*. (Chap. 5. 17.)

The soul who learns the Saviour thus, is ready for the call. Attachment to such an Object means detachment from other things, as governing factors in one's life. Levi felt this ; he had doubtless been struck with the universal astonishment of verse 26, and was not only led to respond to the call, but became so transformed as already in measure to be like the Lord. He desired the blessing of those around him, and gathered together a company of tax-gatherers and others to drink at the Source from which he had drunk with such satisfaction to his soul.

It is a company so blest and transformed who understand the relationship, "Sons of the bride-chamber." They truly cannot fast while the Bridegroom is with them. A similar company is prophetically seen in Canticles 5. 1, and is illustrative of what we know in Christianity. The scene is permeated with—redolent of—the savour of divine grace. Because of the savour of His good ointments those of virgin hearts love Him. In such a scene fasting would be entirely out of place ; especially when the Bridegroom speaks in such terms as these : "Eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." It is easy to pass in thought from this scene to the Lord's supper ; though in Canticles and in Luke 5 the full light of Christianity was not enjoyed—the presence and

DIVINE CERTAINTY.

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appreciation of the same blessed Person fell short of what may be realised at the supper. How marvelously privileged Christians are ! Death passed ; resurrection known, rejoiced in ; ascension-glory apprehended ; the Spirit of sonship given, rendering souls intelligent in divinely formed relationships, divine glories, divine intentions. How could the sons of the bridechamber fast while the Bridegroom is with them ?

Outside—how very different ! The greater the light within, the more oppressive the darkness without—a “darkness that may be felt,” as in Egypt of old. Within, everything ordered by Him who is Son over God’s house—amongst the smallest company who represent it truly ; He, the controlling power, yet acting in grace which considers for each person and every circumstance, but outside, confusion everywhere, even when things appear to the natural mind to be well ordered. In these circumstances we can easily perceive how fasting becomes sons of the bridechamber. Fasting, self-denial and an orphaned condition of soul are our appropriate experience and lot here while we await God’s Son from heaven—unless when He leads His own from time to time to the inside place for intercourse with and to be at home with Himself—our Lord.

J. R. K.

DIVINE CERTAINTY.

IT is surprising the number of persons one meets that are not certain about their soul’s salvation and eternal future, no doubt largely due to faulty teaching. I thought perhaps the following seven-fold expression in 1 John, “We know,” might help

any of the readers of this book who are in a similar condition. To use an expression from a well-known book, "Locked up in doubting castle by Giant Despair." Before drawing attention to these seven utterances from 1 John it is helpful to remember that the Gospel of Luke was written that we might know the *certainty* of the things in which we have been instructed. The first time the expression "We know" occurs in the epistle mentioned is in chapter 3. 2. "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is." What a glorious thought to start with. To be directed at once away from ourselves, which is the chief cause of uncertainty, to the Lord Jesus in heaven. We shall see Him as He is. The next verse tells us the effect of this blessed hope. We seek to be like Him now. You see, the divine certainty is stated first, then the practical effect. Do we not perhaps try to reverse them, hence one cause of our doubts. The second mention of "we know" is chapter 3. 14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Now here is a direct test for any unestablished soul. Do you love the brethren ? Do you love to be in the company of Christians ? Is your heart moved when you hear another believer speak about the Lord. Then this is a sure evidence of a divine work in your soul, which can never be overthrown. In chapter 5 we get five times over this beautiful expression, twice in verse 15 : "We know that he heareth us." The "if" here is relative to the fact stated in the previous verse. How blessed to be assured that not only can we pray to God, but He hears us. Nay, more than this : "We know that we have the petitions that we desired of

PROSPECT.

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him." There is no room for doubters here. Verse 18 gives us the fifth mention, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not." This would help us to think of ourselves entirely apart from the working of the flesh in us, which is often the cause of uncertainty, and to know we are born of God. The wicked one cannot touch us on this line. Verse 19, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." Surely this would keep us from mixing up with the world who are always seeking to rob us of our confidence in God. And lastly, in verse 20, a glorious note of triumph is struck, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true." How can we doubt in face of such definite divine statements. May we all truly set to our seal that God is true.

W. J. W.

PROSPECT.

A NEW year dawns, and we look onward,
Not to its end, but for Thy coming, Lord,
When this life's pilgrimage will close
With all its joys, its sorrows, and its woes.

With this in mind we tread our upward way,
Cheered by the light of that far brighter day ;
Seeking to walk well-pleasing in Thy sight,
And ever in Thy holy will delight.

Oh, help us, Lord, to glorify Thy name,
Prepare us, Lord, to share reproach and shame ;
Without the camp to take with Thee our place,
With faithful men to run the heavenly race.

When glory dawns and in that blessed place,
We see Thee, Lord, and in Thy features trace
The love which won our hearts and set us free,
This will to us be heaven eternally.

J. R. T.

“I’VE COOM.”

THE above words may seem a strange title, but when you have read the following you will not be surprised how rejoiced the writer was to hear the remark made.

We had been visiting for some time a poor old man whose christian name was Job.

He had often done some gardening for us, but had been obliged to give it up owing to his ill health. When the doctor was called in (as he did not improve) he said he could really do nothing for him, for he was worn out.

We had on several occasions spoken to him about his soul’s welfare, but he only displayed his self-righteousness. When he became very ill he said to his wife, “If they only knew I was ill some one would come and see me.” She let us know. This led to our visiting him often. He was very ignorant and could scarcely read or write, and it seemed very difficult to find out exactly where he was in his soul.

On our first visit I quoted the text, “All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on *him* the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53. 6), and as he seemed to understand it, I printed it for him and he had it up in front of his bed where he could see it.

On another visit, when he was worse and had to keep his bed, I was speaking to him of the love of Jesus, and how necessary it was to know Him as our Saviour, when he said, “Yes, I know that, and when I am a little better I mean to have a whole day of prayer.”

I said, “You need not wait till you are better,

nor have a *day* of prayer, Mr. S——; the three words Peter used when he was sinking in the sea are enough: '*Lord, save me,*' and the Lord Jesus put forth His hands and saved him directly. It is not the number of words used, but a single cry to the blessed Lord Jesus, owning yourself a helpless sinner, will be enough, for He said, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' (John 6. 37.) He died to save sinners."

Our old friend listened attentively, but did not say more then.

A few days after I called again. It was on a Sunday afternoon. He was weaker, but seemed very pleased to see me.

I had brought with me some illustrated flags, on which were printed the following words:

The black flag, Jesus sees us.

The blue flag, Jesus seeks us.

The red flag, Jesus saves us.

The gold flag, Jesus satisfies us.

I shewed them to him and we had a little talk about each.

Then he said, "It is all right what you say, but there is a hitch somewhere."

I answered, "Yes, Mr. S——, I think I know where the hitch is; you are *still* trying to do something to make yourself fit for God, and it is all done, Jesus died to save, and He says, 'Come unto me.' Do you *really want* to come to Him?" He replied, "I *do*." I then said, "Shall we come together?" He answered, "Yes." So I knelt down at his bedside and simply said to the Lord: "Lord Jesus, here is Job S—— lying in bed ill; he wants to come to Thee; he is a sinner and asks Thee to save him and wash him from his sins and make him Thine." Then I

quoted that little verse that has been such a comfort to many :

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, *I come.*”

It was a wonderful moment to me. I shall never forget it. I could distinctly feel the Lord's presence in that little bedroom.

As soon as I said “Amen” and rose from my knees, the dear old man said, “Amen, I've coom.”

I said to him as I took his hand, “There is joy in heaven over *you* to-day, Mr. S——, for the lost sheep is found.”

My sister called to see him the next day and said, “Mr. S——, I am so glad you are happy and know your sins are forgiven.” His answer was, “Yes, and so do all those who have coom to Him, but you must *mean* what you say when you coom.”

He lingered on for several weeks to be able to confess his Saviour, and I never knew him to have a single doubt or fear from the moment he was able to say, “*I've coom.*”

Dear young reader, have you *come* to that blessed Saviour who is ready and waiting to save now all who come to Him, for it is written, “He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,” and “Him that *cometh* to me I will in no wise cast out.”

G. S.

BIBLE STUDY AND LENA'S LETTER.

Subject : BLESSING.

It is wonderful the extensive place "*blessing*" has in scripture, and yet *not* wonderful if we know a little of the heart of God, who loves to stand in the attitude of Blesser to His creature man, and to lavish favours upon His people.

'Tis His great delight to bless us,
Oh ! how He loves !

Take for example the beautiful, well-known verse (Eph. 1. 3) Don't you think it will be a good subject for study during this first month of a new year ?

In studying some of the numerous passages where blessing is spoken of, it seems to me that there are at least two distinct significations to the word.

which gives both uses of the words : "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.*"

The believer can say, "God . . . *who hath blessed us,*" and then on the other hand he blesses the Blesser, and we have many similar instances in other parts of scripture.

Hebrews 7. 7, in speaking of Melchisedec blessing Abraham, tells us that "the less is blessed of the better," and we know that this also refers to God, who only can truly bless. A verse in 2 Samuel 14. 22 will help us as to the second use of the word.

In speaking of Joab "*thanking*" the king, the same Hebrew word is used as that used for "bless." To make this clearer still—in recording the institution of the Lord's supper, Matthew and Mark tell us that the Lord took bread and "*blessed,*" while in Luke and 1 Corinthians 11 He took bread and "*gave thanks,*" which goes to shew that "blessing" in this sense and "giving thanks" are the same. So in our example verse in Ephesians 1 it could read, "Thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God *blesses us* by conferring the greatest favours upon us ; and we, in return, *bless Him* by offering thanks and praise for them. God often used His servants of old to pronounce His blessing and to convey the same, and He continues to do so to-day.

QUESTIONS.

1. Who is the "blesser" and who the "blessed" in the following passages :

(1) Genesis 9. 1 ; (2) Genesis 24. 35 ; (3) Genesis 39. 5 ; (4) Genesis 47. 10 ; (5) Leviticus 9. 23 ; (6) Deuteronomy 33. 1 ; (7) Joshua 14. 13 ; (8) Judges 13. 24 ; (9) 2 Samuel 6. 20 ; (10) Luke 2. 34 ?

2. In the Book of Deuteronomy (chaps. 14-16 inclusive) much is said of the Lord blessing His earthly people and the past, present and future tenses are used. Quote the verses that illustrate this.

3. (a) David, (b) Daniel, (c) Ezra, (d) Hezekiah and the princes,

GOODLY WORDS.

(e) the children of Israel all "blessed" God. Mention the occasions, giving references.

4. Learn and then quote from memory either Matthew 5. 3-12 or Deuteronomy 28. 2-9 inclusive.

[*Replies to be sent to "LENA," Grasmere, Burgess Hill, Sussex.*]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I have so enjoyed reading your essays on "Liberty," some of which are very good, and all show an intelligent appreciation of this much-to-be-desired state of soul, which has greatly cheered me. Well might the Apostle Paul call it "the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. 8. 21.) Oh, that it may be the portion of each of us to live in the enjoyment of the liberty that belongs to God's children, and, like the restored prodigal, know what it is to wear the shoes!

I miss several familiar handwritings, but possibly I may get a few more essays later. I hope you will all enjoy the study of "the blessing of the Lord." It is such a full subject that one feels we only just touch the fringe of it, but if through the study we get a deeper sense of the wonderful heart of love behind all the blessing, we shall reap a good spiritual harvest.

May the Lord indeed crown this New Year with His rich blessing, not only for our little circle, but for all His dear people in whatever circumstances they may be found and on whatever quarter of the globe they live.

With earnest prayers for spiritual prosperity throughout it.

Yours affectionately,

LENA.

List of Replies to Essay on "Liberty" (November).

Class 1.—Cissy Allison,* Charis Bazlinton, Mary Brown,* Winnie Dunham, Cecil Eayrs, Willie Eayrs,* Grace Eayrs,* Nora Huson, Robert Ireland, Eliz. Millar, Dorothy Moorhouse, Grace Railton,* Nellie Railton, Irene Rusling, Ethel Schneider, Edna Storey, Eleanor Tedbury, Kathleen Tipler, Albert Tipler.*

Class 2.—Elsie Evered, Isabel Mayo, Olive Norris.

Late for August.—*Class 1.*—Isabella Walker. *Class 2.*—Priscilla Walker, Herbert Walker, Donald Walker.

"NO GOOD THING WILL HE WITHHOLD."

HE will provide ; He'll undertake for ever ;

He will confide ; naught from His love can sever ;

His ways are right ! Tho' tears and praise be blending.

Oh, give Him thanks ! For His great love unending.

B. E. M. H.

THE MAN OF GOD—ELISHA.

No. 5.

(2_KINGS 13.)

IN the scripture at the head of this paper we reach the last reference to Elisha as a man of God.

Elisha's prophetic ministry had covered a great number of years and he had in all probability seen six kings on the throne of Judah and six on the throne of Israel. Sixty years had passed since Elijah had been taken from him into heaven and nearly fifty since he first came before us as a man of God. What a record of the faithfulness of God to His beloved servant, and of Elisha's devotedness to God in the pathway of service to which He had called him!

He has now "fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died." But there was no decline in faithfulness or spiritual energy. Joash the king of Israel came down unto him and wept over his face. At such a moment the king recognised the value of the man of God in his kingdom. The day will come when the world will recognise its indebtedness to the presence of the Christian—but, alas! not until it is too late to get the gain of the recognition.

To bring it closer home, how often the presence of a man of God in our midst is unappreciated and indeed unrecognised until he is about to depart. May we with exercised hearts have our eyes opened so that we may take account of the lives and give heed to the words of such men.

Joash had to learn that God still desired to act in grace towards His people in spite of their state.

We also see that although overcome by his feelings at the thought of the departure of Elisha, he was nevertheless lacking in spiritual instincts and power. The man of God was wroth with Joash. Why? He had not apprehended the words of verse 17. The arrow of the Lord's deliverance was in his hand and he knew it not! How touching it must have been when Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands and said, "Open the window eastward." The coming glory was before the eye of Elisha. In a later day we see that if the glory departed by way of the east, it was to return the same way. The sun of Israel was sinking in the west, but Elisha's face and thoughts were towards the east. Even so with us, we may see that all the glory of this world is rapidly sinking, but our gaze is stedfastly fixed upon the coming glory—towards the east—the sun-rising.

Elisha says to Joash, "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times"; or, in other words, until deliverance had been accomplished.

Although Joash had greeted Elisha with the same words that Elisha had himself used at the translation of Elijah, how different their effect. The hands of Joash were slack, faith was not behind them; Elisha, on the contrary, in the fulness of the energy of faith took Elijah's mantle and smote the waters, and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over." There are wonderful possibilities for the energy of faith. Even when this is absent, how the faithfulness of God is seen, for we read in verse 23 that "the Lord was gracious unto

THE BIBLE—I SAMUEL.

23

them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

How this proves that God loves His people and intends blessing to come to them in spite of the failure of those whom He would deign to use !

In conclusion we may notice that the power of the man of God abides although he himself may pass off the scene. So in verse 21 the testimony of life and resurrection is found even in the sepulchre of the man of God.

J. R. T.

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THE BIBLE—I SAMUEL.

WE were noticing that the end of the Book of Ruth brings David before us. In the first and second Books of Samuel we have the details of his history. He is a striking type of Christ.

Three main ideas come before us in the first book. First there is the failure of the priestly line and a change in the ways of God—the king becomes the link. (Chap. 2. 10.) Secondly, man's king is brought before us with his tests and failure, and in contrast thereto, God's king—"a man after his own heart"—with his victory and honour. Thirdly, the apparent contradiction, for man's king is on the throne and God's king is in rejection. We read in Acts 13. 22 that when God had removed Saul, He raised up unto them David to be their king, to whom He gives testimony, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall fulfil all my will." The removal of Saul was not arbitrary ; it was a divine necessity.

Until the days of the Book of Samuel, the priesthood

had been the link between God and the people, but it had become corrupted, and God brings in judgment on the condition of things. How interesting it is to see little Samuel first brought to the Lord by his devoted mother, and then growing up a child ministering to the Lord, and afterwards established as a prophet of the Lord. Between the last two, a great event happened in Samuel's history. He had a personal history with the Lord. Until then he had been a child spiritually, like many of us who have been children in christian households, but there came a moment in Samuel's history when he knew the Lord personally, and there must be a moment in our history when we personally know the Lord for ourselves, and we can turn to our parents and say, like the men in John 4 said to the woman who had told them of Christ, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves and know."

Samuel was grieved at the people wanting a king, but bows to God's ways and anoints the one whom God gives to them in answer to their request. Saul was a man we should all have admired. His natural qualities and his stature would have attracted us greatly. The tests that God gave him, however, proved that he was not the man after God's own heart. He has his private test in chapter 13. Failure marks him here. His public test is in chapter 15, when he is sent to destroy the Amalekites; we know how he failed there. Verse 22 tells us the secret of his failure; obedience to the will of God was lacking: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." In chapter 16 Samuel is told to mourn no longer for Saul, but to go and anoint the king that God had chosen. In chapter

13. 14 Samuel says, "The Lord hath sought him a *man* after his own heart," but here we read that God had provided a *king*. This reminds us of Psalms 1 and 2. Psalm 1 is the man; Psalm 2 is the king.

As the sons of Jesse came before Samuel, the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature . . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." And David is chosen. In chapter 17 we find the victory of David, which was his public test. He had had previous ones, which were private, just as Saul had. He had had experience with God, gained in secret when he had slain the lion and the bear, and now in public he can trust God. He had no warning of this great test. It was in the ordinary pursuit of his life that it came to him, feeding his father's flock and doing his father's will.

A dead Goliath and fleeing enemies tell us how complete the victory was. In chapter 18 we find that one heart was captivated by David. Saul could not stand being eclipsed, and as the women said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," he was very wroth and said, "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands." But this is a test that we each have, and faith delights to recognise that Christ must have all the glory. We know how eventually Saul's hatred led him to attempt to kill David, and David had to flee. Jonathan is slow to realise that David can have no part in Saul's kingdom, and he never takes the place of sharing the rejection with him. Poor Jonathan! no cross, no crown. Jonathan goes to the city, and David is found

in chapter 22 in the cave of Adullam, and eventually they part in chapter 23. 18, and they never meet again. David abides in the wood and Jonathan went to his house.

I wonder if any of my young readers are like Jonathan ? Let me affectionately urge you whole-heartedly to throw in your lot with Christ, who is at present the rejected King. Chapter 22 gives us a simple but beautiful proof of the gain of being with Christ in rejection. There is the prophet, the priest and the king. The prophet gives the mind of God, the priest supports us in the will of God and in the king is the protection of God, for he is our Leader. We have all this in Christ.

Many times Saul attempted to kill David. The Lord delivered him out of his hand. We remember in chapter 26 when David came by night to where Saul had pitched, and a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon Saul's company, David might have killed Saul, but he would not stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and in the deep sense of how God delivered him, he could say, "As thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation."

It is sad to think of David in chapter 27 saying in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." David's heart was like our hearts ; they never can be trusted. We need constant dependence upon God and constant watchfulness. The beginning of David's departure at the latter part of Samuel is seen in this utterance of his heart. Scripture says, "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Eventually David is found about to join hands with the Philistines in fighting against King Saul and Israel. To what great lengths we may go unless we keep our hearts. God mercifully overruled all and David is not allowed to fight with the Philistines. It was an awful battle. Saul and Jonathan were slain, as we read in chapter 31: "So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together."

There is a great difference between Saul in his departure and David in his. Saul turns to spiritual evil when God does not answer him (see chap. 28. 6, 7), but David encourages himself in the Lord. (Chap. 30. 6.) The darkest time of the night is just before the dawn of day. Things were very dark in chapter 30. 1-6, but it was the beginning of the day of David's recovery.

One happy instance I have omitted to refer to is that of Abigail. She illustrates our place as appreciating David in the day of his rejection. She judges the actions of Nabal, as we may judge our own sinful hearts, hearts which hate Christ, and we can say as we think of all the evil in our hearts: "It is no longer I, but sin that dwells in me." In this way God gives us deliverance from the power of sin. We learn that the cross has ended all that we are as sinners. As soon as Abigail judges Nabal's action, God comes in and delivers her from being identified with him, and she becomes David's wife; and "we are married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead."

M. W. B.

SONS OF THE BRIDECHAMBER.

(LUKE 5. 36 TO 6. 5.)

WE have seen on a previous occasion that the moral condition of those named "sons of the bridechamber" is the result of divine dealing, in some five successive stages. These were illustrated, as we saw, in the incidents given in chapter 5. 1-35—the state being the cumulative effect of all, successively and in the aggregate. The Lord Himself also was before us, according to His grace, sympathy, power and attractiveness, displayed in the incidents. There were miracles (signs) to confirm the faith of believers, and to affect others in various ways, as is also to be observed in John 2. 11, 23 ; 3. 2, and elsewhere.

The ministry of the Lord in Luke 5 up to verse 35, therefore, was such as the simplest believer could follow ; while our present subject appeals more to the spiritual understanding of such as He named "sons of the bridechamber." Our minds do not readily take in the application of the Lord's references to a new garment, new wine and new bottles ; but it is our privilege and, in a sense, necessary to *know*—even experimentally—their spiritual import.

The Lord sometimes spoke in terms which were afterwards to be elucidated and applied, "when he, the Spirit of truth," should come. He had many things to say to His own, which they could not then bear ; they should await the day of His resurrection and glory, and the consequent presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. He enunciated, in parables, great moral principles, to be afterwards unfolded through the apostles, chiefly through the Apostle Paul.

Luke companied with Paul during some seven years (Acts 20 to 2 Tim. 4), and thus became a competent vessel of the Holy Ghost, to present "in order" "the matters fully believed" amongst Christians, including the Lord's anticipative allusions to what would be unfolded in the Spirit's day. The word of salvation "began to be spoken by the Lord," and was confirmed unto others by them who heard Him. The parable of the prodigal, which Luke only gives, corresponds to Paul's ministry in Romans, Colossians and Ephesians. The mission of* "the seventy," which Luke, also, only tells us of (chap. 10. 1), anticipated the great outflow of testimony from Acts 8 onward. Other instances may be recalled, but we must return to the "parable" in Luke 5.

We notice it is a "new garment" here, though "new cloth" in Matthew 9. 16 and Mark 2. 21. Garments have reference to walk, declaring the *man* (Rev. 16. 15); and the Christian is to "walk in newness of life"—"the old man" having been judged in the death of Christ. Note that in Ephesians 4. 17 to 5. 1, the christian walk begins with the repudiation of vanity, and leads up to walking in love, "imitators of God, as beloved children."

Vanity is to be seen all around us, and with David we may say: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity"; but the fuller light of Christianity reveals vanity *within*, corruption too. But, thank God, it also supplies, in the self-sacrificing love of our Redeemer, the divine incentive for judging and repudiating the evils discovered there. He has graciously identi-

* Their names "written in heaven" (Luke 10. 20) anticipated the heavenly calling of the church, unfolded in Hebrews, (See chap. 3. 1.)

fied Himself with us in death, bearing the judgment due to our sin; and in virtue of this has, in His resurrection, opened up a new spiritual sphere for us—known to faith even now. Into this sphere *we are raised*, with Christ, as faith takes account of things (Col. 2. 12, 13); and we learn what it is to be quickened together with Him in that resurrection sphere. Christ is our life, and we learn to hate more and more and shun things displeasing to God, while living to Him in responsive, holy love.

It is thus we can realise something of “having *put off* the old man, which is corrupt”; and “*put on* the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.”

Note here that the word *new* in the instances accented above (including *newness*) means entirely new *in kind*, and is the term used in regard to new garment and new bottles in Luke 5. It is in fact suggestive of *new creation*. In the case of “new wine,” new is a different word in the original.

The bottles in common use were made of *skins*, which involved death; and in this we have at least the suggestion that to be a vessel for new wine—in other words, divinely given joys—we must know something of death, participation with our Lord Jesus Christ in *His* death. This is indeed solemn; but as His death was the manifestation of divine love towards us we do not shrink from the exercise; we find in it our *food*—eating His flesh and drinking His blood in true inward appropriation, for *life*, and abiding in Him.

The believer is thus acceptable to God, rejoices before Him, and expresses his sense of the grace accorded, in presenting to God his heartfelt appreciation of

Christ. Typical of this the Israelite brought his bullock, as a voluntary burnt offering. The offering gave pleasure to God, who found in it a sweet savour ; the offerer also had his joy—he drank of new wine (spiritually). David could say, “Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God, my *exceeding joy*,” or “the gladness of my joy.”

To go a step further, the priest who presented the burnt offering had the skin for himself ; so the soul now who presents Christ to God, if he be in priestly state, as well as offerer, *learns* acceptance and favour with God, according to all that Christ is. He has the *skin*, typically speaking ; that is, he *knows* what it is to be before God in Christ—is himself thus the new bottle, and is filled with new wine.

The Spirit of God discriminates in our scripture between new as applied to wine, and *new* as applied to garment and bottles. In the last two cases it is the same as is used in *new* creation (2 Cor. 5. 17 and Ephesians) ; while, in the first case (that is, new wine), it is new in contrast to old, implying freshness, strength, vigour. We may gather from the difference that normal kingdom joys are not up to new creation fulness. They will be experienced on earth during the millennium, and are known now to all who are in the good of spiritual kingdom-blessing. (Rom. 5. 1, 2 ; 14. 17.) The deeper, fuller joys belong to heaven, the family, eternity. They are of new creation order, as are the vessels ; and we may taste them now, anticipatively of new creation circumstances. Do we enter into the full significance of Luke 15. 23—communion in the Father’s house, the Father’s delights, the Father’s heart ? We sometimes sing :

GOODLY WORDS.

"Our hearts are more than filled with joy,
 Our cup, indeed, runs o'er,
 And, Father, in Thy presence now
 We worship and adore."

We can scarcely doubt that such joys were before the Lord's mind in Matthew 26. 29, where the word *new* carries the fuller sense, as in new creation.

A brief reference to Luke 6. 1-5 must suffice. "The second-first sabbath" (New Trans.) implies, according to Jewish reckoning, a Pentecostal scene, the wheat-harvest, which is confirmatory of the view that our scripture (chaps. 5. 36 to 6. 5, as in Mark 2) anticipates the Spirit's day. The Lord of the sabbath leads His disciples into the liberty of the kingdom, to enjoy "the corn of the land"; and as the earth-rejected King, Antitype of David, He suggests to His own that the liberty of the house of God and priestly food were their's, because associated with Him.

J. R. K.

THE LIGHT OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST

THE light of the day in which we live is the light of the glory of Christ. When He rose from the dead, it was the morning of an eternal day. I would draw attention to the fourfold effect of the light as seen in the Apostle Paul. (1) It *convicts* and *brings down*; (2) it *liberates*, and *lifts up*; (3) it *transforms*; (4) it *governs the whole life* of the believer.

As Saul journeyed to Damascus, suddenly there shone round about him a light from heaven. Elsewhere he tells us it was a great light, above the brightness of the sun, a light eclipsing even the midday sun. This could be nothing less than the light of the glory of Christ,

the light of the glory of God. A voice spoke to him out of heaven, he heard one saying, "*I am JESUS.*" The light shone into his conscience; he found that the One whom he hated and whose saints he had been persecuting was the Lord of glory.

Jesus is the Lord of glory. What a discovery to make, to find out that with all his religious zeal and self-righteousness he had been fighting against the Lord of glory. The name of Jesus was one he associated with a man who was crucified, dead and buried. But now he hears Him speaking out of heaven from the place of power and glory. He said, "Who art thou, Lord?" He fell to the earth, a convicted, helpless sinner. The first effect of the light is to make all things manifest and to shew things to be what they really are. For the first time Saul saw himself to be what he really was, a sinner, yea, the very chief. The light revolutionised all his thoughts and judgment of himself. The chief of Pharisees is converted into the chief of sinners. (Compare Phil. 3. 4-6 with 1 Tim. 1. 12-16.) The light brings the soul into the presence of God, so that he judges himself in relation, not to men, but in relation to God and to Christ. It is there we discover what we really are. With all our morality and religiousness we find out that there is hatred to Christ and to God in our hearts; that is the root of all sin, and its worst feature. It was the testimony of God revealed in Christ and maintained in the saints which drew forth all his enmity.

It is hard for us to believe that this enmity is found in all our hearts, but so it is. Christ is the great test for our heart. "What think ye of Christ?" We may be very moral and religious, yet there may be

no place for Christ in our hearts. We may profess to love Christ, but the test is, do we love the saints, those who are beloved by Christ and in whom Christ lives? If we do not love the saints and appreciate their company, it proves that we do not really love Christ. Saul was tested in this way; the Lord said to him, "Why persecutest thou me?" How depraved the heart must be which sees no beauty, no comeliness in Christ, the One in whom God finds all His pleasure, His well-beloved Son. It was thus that Saul discovered that he was the chief of sinners. Such a discovery might well bring us down to dust and ashes and banish from us all our pride and self-confidence. We must needs be *brought down* before we can be lifted up.

(2) The same light which convicts and brings down, is that which *liberates* the soul and *lifts up*—the light of Christ as Man in the glory of God. The presence of Christ as Man in glory is the great proof that the sin question has been settled to the glory of God. His place in glory is God's righteous answer to the work accomplished on the cross, the expression of His complete satisfaction in the work which clears us from all our guilt and sin. On the cross He took our sins upon Him, and when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, He for ever sat down on the right hand of God. What stronger proof could we have that those sins have been for ever put away! He has not carried them up into heaven. But more than this, He not only took our sins upon Him, but was *made sin* for us. That is, He was on the cross identified with all that we were as sinful men, so that all might be condemned and thus be for ever removed from before God. Now He is before God in all the

virtue and acceptance of the work in which He has glorified God, and so represents us there.

The more we see His glory, the more we see the greatness of His acceptance and of our acceptance in Him. He is our righteousness before God ; He is our life ; in Him we are brought nigh to God. Christ in glory is manifested to be God's beloved Son, and we are taken into favour in Him, so that we see that the love which rests on Him rests upon us in Him. Christ in glory is the living expression of God's thoughts toward us, and of our place before Him, and of the place and glory to which He will ultimately bring us. This light of a glorified Christ may well liberate us and lift us up. If on the one hand the knowledge of what we are brings us down, on the other hand the knowledge of what God is to us in Christ lifts us up.

(3) In the next place the light *transforms us*. "We all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are *transformed* according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." How strikingly this is seen in Paul. The man who was the most inveterate enemy of Christ and of the saints, becomes the most devoted servant of Christ, one who was ready to surrender everything, and lay down his life for Christ and for those who were His. The one who had formerly exhibited the traits of a man in Adam, a proud, overbearing man, a blasphemer, and a persecutor, became a model for the saints, as one in whom the spirit and grace of Christ were so beautifully manifested, more perhaps than in any other man. He became meek, gentle, humble, self-sacrificing, one who could say, "Be imitators all together of me, brethren, and fix your eyes on

those walking thus as you have ^{us} for a model." What an example of the transforming power of the heavenly light. The same transforming effect will be seen in every one of us in proportion as we are walking in the light of the Lord. The apostle had no thought of confining it to himself; he says, "*We all*," etc. We cannot by any effort or will of our own transform ourselves, but beholding the glory of the Lord we are transformed; unconsciously to ourselves, others take account of it.

The apostle exhorts us, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The mind being engaged with Christ, and all that is revealed of God in Him, the transformation goes on progressively from glory to glory, until the Lord puts on the finishing touch and transforms our bodies of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory at His coming. The great work going on at the present time is the *moral transformation*, and this is one great reason why we are left here.

(4) Then, lastly, we see how the light *governed the whole life* of Paul. He could say, "In that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me." We are still in bodies of flesh, and in a life of service and responsibility in various relationships and circumstances. It is our privilege to take up all in the light of the Son of God; that light should govern us. We look up to heaven and see that glorious Person, the Son of God, in the place of power and glory, and we can say, "He has loved me and given himself for me." What a Person to serve! What a mighty influence is the love of Christ. Nothing else will hold us to Him, nothing else will deliver us from being

self-centred. "For the love of Christ constrains us, having judged this : that one died for all . . . that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but *to him* who died for them and has been raised." If we are to be freed from self, we must have an object outside ourselves, and God has given us One well worthy to engage our thoughts and affections ; One, too, who is well able to support us in every condition into which we may be called in following and serving Him. His grace is sufficient, and His strength is made perfect in weakness. We have nothing to fear. And if it be a life of reproach, and suffering, and loss, what is that compared with the present fulness of grace and the future glory revealed in the Son of God ? "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us," so said the apostle. He could say he counted all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Under the influence of the light of the glory of the Lord, his life was one of devotedness to the Lord and of self-sacrifice and unwearying service for the church.

"And heavenly light makes all things bright,
Seen in that blissful gaze.

And stayed by joy divine,
As hireling fills his day,
Through scenes of strife and desert life,
We tread in peace our way."

May we all prove the blessedness of this life of faith as we walk in the sunshine of the love and glory of the Son of God.

F. H. B.

BIBLE STUDY FOR FEBRUARY.

SUBJECT : THE CURSE.

We were occupied with the *blessing* of the Lord last month. It seemed such a happy subject with which to start a New Year, and I have tried to put this subject from me as one of, perhaps, not much spiritual help, yet I feel urged to suggest it for our study this month. It is possible that we need to get a clearer view of this great contrast to the blessing of the Lord. May the Lord by His Holy Spirit help us to this end !

By "the curse" I think we understand the punishment pronounced by God resultant upon man's first act of disobedience. It is very beautiful to notice that, though man failed in his loyalty to his Creator, he personally is *not* cursed.

The serpent, the tempter, *is*. The Lord God said unto the serpent, "Thou art cursed above *all* cattle." (Refer to Genesis 3. 14 ; Micah 7. 17 ; Revelation 12. 9 ; 20. 2, 3, 7, 10.)

The ground is also cursed for man's sake, thorns and briers being the mark of this.

Toil and sorrow follow the curse both for man and woman. Years pass away and finally the flood shuts the door upon that period of man's unbridled wickedness.

Emerging on to a renewed earth, Noah offers a burnt offering to God, and in virtue of its sweet savour God makes a covenant with Noah and his descendants, and as a token sets His bow in the cloud. "The Lord said in his heart, I will not *again* curse the ground any more for man's sake," and regular seasons, etc., are promised, which still witness to us of God's faithfulness.

Romans 8. 20-22 tells us that the whole creation groans now, but Isaiah 55. 12, 13 and 65. 18-25 tells of the time of deliverance, when the sad results of the curse will be removed, with one striking exception—even in the blissful millennial days, we read, "and dust shall be the serpent's meat."

* * * * *

God, in His sovereignty, chose an earthly people, descendants of Abraham, His friend, redeemed them, delivered them from Egypt, conducted them through the wilderness, bearing with their perversity, and finally gave them the land of promise for their inheritance.

There, filled with their own self-sufficiency, they vow, "All that the Lord commandeth us we will do," and to prove to them their utter inability to do this God gave them His law attendant with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

All failed to keep it, therefore *all came under the curse*. (Ref. Deut. 28.)

Paul, writing to the Galatian Christians, sharply reproves them for placing themselves under law, and thus under the curse. (See chap. 3, read carefully.) He says, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse : for it is written, Cursed is *every*

one that continueth *not in all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them." But he goes on to say, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Vers. 10-13.)

It is also a touching fact that Christ wore a crown of thorns, the marks of the curse on the earth.

Is there any danger, dear young friends, of any of us putting ourselves under the curse that Christ died to free us from ? In the face of the foregoing scriptures I do not think we can pray, "Incline our heart to keep thy law."

Write an essay on our subject.

[*Replies to be sent to "LENA," Grasmere, Burgess Hill, Sussex.*]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

Whatever should we do without "hope," "the hope that maketh not ashamed" ? The reason why it does not make ashamed follows so beautifully : "because the love of God is *shed abroad* in our hearts by the Holy Ghost *which is given unto us.*" (Rom. 5. 5.) It is for us individually to ask ourselves whether, as those who are justified and have peace with God (see Rom. 5. 1) we are allowing the Holy Ghost to thus operate in our hearts shedding abroad this wonderful love of God. If there were nothing to hinder this operation on our side, what a divine brilliance this shedding abroad would create. I think others could not help being affected by it.

The accompanying list will shew that I have had a very satisfactory set of papers to look through. The way Question 2, which needed a good deal of careful thought, was answered by some gratified me very much. You, of course, have noticed that I frequently give a passage to be committed to memory. I do this remembering with thankfulness the number of chapters and psalms that I learnt during my younger days. When once learnt they so often recur to one's memory to help and cheer, or warn and direct, when circumstances would not allow one to sit down with the scriptures to seek direction from them at the moment.

I hope to send a list, for insertion in the March number, of those who have done the exercises throughout the year and have done very well. We are also hoping to send each of these Searchers a small expression of our appreciation of their steady good work.

Yours affectionately,

LENA.

List of Replies to December Study.

Subject : HOPE.

Class 1.—Cissy Allison,* Charis Bazlinton, Mary Brown, Winnie Dunham, Willie Eayrs,* Grace Eayrs,* Nora Huxon,* Muriel Lloyd,*

Dorothy Moorhouse, Grace Railton,* Mary Railton, Irene Rusling, Ethel Schneider, Kathleen Suckling,* Eleanor Tedbury, Kathleen Tipler, Albert Tipler,* Freda Watts, Mildred Watson.

Class 2.—Robert Ireland, Elizabeth Millar, Edna Storey.

Late for September.—*Class 1.*—Grace McPhce. *Class 2.*—Priscilla Walker, Isabella Walker, Herbert Walker, Donald Walker.

Late for October.—*Class 2.*—Freda Watts.

Late for November.—*Class 1.*—Elsie Buckley, Freda Watts, Mildred Watson.* *Class 2.*—Muriel Lloyd.

ESSAY ON LIBERTY. (NOVEMBER.)

Liberty is the condition into which the believer is called, that by which he is characterised, having been wrought for him by the precious blood of Christ.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the Lord, said that He was sent "to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isa. 61. 1.) How many broken hearts did He bind up, and how many did He set at liberty from the thralldom of Satan's power while here on earth!

By His death on the cross He completely broke the power of the enemy, so that the believer is now at liberty, free to enjoy all that has been accomplished for him there.

It is important that we should stand fast in this liberty. The Apostle Paul emphasises this in his Epistle to the Galatians, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free." (Gal. 5. 1.) How exceedingly blessed this liberty is! It has been described by one as being "glorious" (Rom. 8. 21), and Jesus Himself said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8. 36.)

But this liberty is not to be misused, as the following verses shew: "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak." (1 Cor. 8. 9.) "Not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness." (1 Peter 2. 16.) And "Use not liberty for an occasion unto the flesh." (Gal. 5. 13.)

As we rest in the love of God, being made free from sin, as having died with Christ, we are at perfect liberty to praise and serve God, and to yield our members servants unto righteousness, and unto holiness. (Rom. 6. 19.)

It is also becoming on the part of each one of us that we should please our neighbour (Rom. 15. 2), make ourselves the servant of all (1 Cor. 9. 19), and that by love we should serve one another. (Gal. 5. 13.) For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Cor. 3. 17.)

C. A.

THE MAN OF GOD—DAVID.

(2 CHRON. 8. 14 ; NEH. 12. 36.)

THE mention of David as a man of God in the two scriptures at the head of this paper is interesting and suggestive.

In each case David had passed off the scene, but there is the recognition by Solomon and in Nehemiah that to David had been given light for the moment with respect to the ordering of the house of God, and for them obedience was the only course.

David had been through many exercises in relation to the house of God that Solomon knew nothing about. Some of his exercises come out in Psalm 132.

David is of course a type of Christ in these things, and in Psalm 69 it is said prophetically of Him, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," and again in Hebrews 8 the Lord is spoken of as "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

Viewed in this light the wisdom of Solomon is seen in paying heed to the instructions given by David as to the priests, the Levites, the porters, and the whole service of the house of God. Then, too, we see that David in the character of head is marked by wisdom. He recognises a new order of things was coming in and a new position had come to pass, and he leaves instruction in relation to *that*. He is thus morally greater than Solomon. It is a great thing for us in relation to the house of God to be

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under influence of the Head, that is, Christ. We are so apt to be like those in the end of the Book of Judges, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes"; this is a sad and sorrowful path to take, as we see from the sequel. On the other hand it is a wonderful moment in our spiritual history when we are brought to recognise that with Christ as Minister there is no breakdown, and that He is the One—the only One—who can maintain divine service, the holy places, and all the vessels of the sanctuary in holy fitness.

In David's time there were the priests who were each to find an ordered place in ministering to God, and this was done, as we see in 2 Chronicles 5. How blessed was their experience when the house of God was filled with a cloud—the glory cloud of the presence of the Lord. God had stepped into His own house so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud (to minister would be out of place at such a moment as that); all we should desire would be, like the two in John 1, to enjoy His presence.

Then there were the Levites who carried the things—the precious things—of God in and through the wilderness, but who in the service of the temple were to praise and minister before the priests. *To praise.* Thus there would be something for God. There were varied instruments, cymbals, psalteries, harps and singers, but there was no discord, just one harmonious note for the ear of God. "It came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as *one*, to make *one* sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord"; would it not have been surprising had the Lord withheld His presence from such a company. So to-day the Holy Spirit delights to take up different instru-

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ments (you and me) and to play upon them, so that :

“Together, then, their songs
Of endless praise,
With *one* harmonious voice,
In joy they'll raise.”

May our hearts be so touched by the love of God which has reached us in Christ Jesus our Lord that we may be marked by singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord.

Then there were the porters by their courses at every gate. What an important position this is. A gatekeeper, as the word signifies. What spiritual discernment is needed. Every gate had its porter, whose duties would be to let nothing in that would be unsuitable to the glory that had filled the house of God. The Lord when here found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting. Where were the porters? This is not menial work but work requiring holy vigilance and a divinely-given knowledge as to what is suitable for a place in the house of God. Thus we see that David ordered all things, the order of priesthood, regulation as to Levitical service, the singers and the psalms they were to sing, the vessels to be used and the guarding of the gates. May we be like Solomon and carry out divine instructions given by Him whose love for His assembly is infinite.

In closing we would call attention to the passage in Nehemiah, because whilst in Solomon's day it was the beginning of things in all their pristine glory, with Nehemiah how different were the conditions! The kingdom had fallen and it was a day of brokenness and failure, just a handful returned from Baby-

lon together in weakness with the glory of Jehovah at heart, and in that day and at that moment they fall back upon David's ordering as to the service of the house of God.

The days in which our lot is cast may be days of brokenness, failure and weakness, yet there will always remain the christian company and we shall be able to find those who are continuing stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. This will truly bring us in touch with the Lord and with one another.

J. R. T.

SEVEN MOUNTAINS.

IN the scriptures before me I propose we shall look at the moral order in which these seven mountains are presented.

I think they suggest the necessity of leaving the din of this world and of going *up* if we are to get into the mind of God.

Genesis 8. 4-5. **Ararat.** The first intervention of God on behalf of man after the fall was the flood. For the world the flood became a judgment; for Noah and his family it was salvation. It will be so at the second coming of Christ: for His own, salvation; but for the world, judgment. So we see that the more the judgment falls the more the ark rises to an elevation where salvation can be known. This is where our spiritual history begins after redemption is known. We learn that salvation is of the Lord and that He delivers us from this present world. There is no salvation in that respect to be found outside the house of God, of which the ark was a type. I trust we have

all reached this spot ; if so, we shall find there is liberty to become a worshipper.

Deuteronomy 3. 27. **Pisgah.** Now we can take a survey of the land. Canaan suggests all the blessings that are in Christ. Moses speaks in Deuteronomy 11 of the land as one of "hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year"; and in chapter 8 as "a good land . . . of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey . . . a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." Have we ever in our souls taken a survey of the christian blessings unfolded in the first two chapters of Ephesians? If so, nothing will ever satisfy us until we get into them. Moses was to look westward, northward, southward and eastward. Have we surveyed the dimensions of the blessing found in Christ? This will indeed bring satisfaction.

Numbers 20. 25-27. **Hor.** Here Aaron has to be stripped, and Eleazar, the priest in connection with the land, is clothed. We need to know Christ in priestly character as set forth by Aaron in relation to the wilderness; in Ithamar with respect of the holy things; and in Eleazar in connection with the land. This answers to Colossians, where we are looked at as "having put off the old man with his deeds; and having put on the new, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," followed by the exhortation, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness," etc.

Genesis 22. 1, 2, 15 ; 17. 14. **Moriah.** This brings in the thought of surrender : giving up *everything* and in return getting *everything*. Abraham learned that in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen, and this is said to this day. Moses wrote down this motto and it has never been erased. The angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time. He waited about in the mountain after the surrender of his son for the second voice. He gave up Isaac, but received him back in resurrection with multiplication of blessing, "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore . . . in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice." The son is given back, God is glorified and Abraham accepted and blessed. We, the heirs of promise, have been more abundantly blessed. (Heb. 6. 17.)

Luke 9. 28-31. This is **transfiguration**. The Lord Jesus did not go up to be transfigured but to pray. Christ *never* gave up His dependence upon God. Let us lean upon God, and in doing so we shall be sustained in the love of God. Upon this mount you find Jesus is there, all the light of heaven is shining there, the glory is shining through all His clothing. Those whom the Lord took up with Him were called to enter into the cloud and to hear and to participate with the Father in all the preciousness of the Son. We have reached the peak, the highest point, and the vision is that of the glorified Man—the Man Christ Jesus in the brightest glory in heaven. It is what He was that shone forth—we get God's thoughts about His Son.

Hebrews 12. 22-24. **Zion.** This is Christ in resurrection. Not what He was here, but what He is

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in resurrection. The idea of Mount Zion is found in Isaiah 35, 10 : " The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Rev. 21. 10-22 ; 22. 1-5. **Great and high mountain.** We must go up to this great and high mountain for the unfolding of the glories that can only be seen on the top—the excellent glories of the heavenly city. There are seven things to be seen in the city. In verse 11 the glory of God is expressed in infinite and eternal satisfaction ; in verse 12 the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel ; in verse 13 its twelve gates ; in verse 15 the city is measured ; in verse 18 the building of its wall is spoken of ; in verse 22 there is no temple, for God is fully displayed ; and in verse 25 no night there, darkness is passed. In the five verses in chapter 22 there are seven great blessings flowing out from the city, the city which is composed of the people of God—we have come to a spot where no one will say they have need of anything. The first blessing is a pure river of water of life—there is abundance of life, it is clear as crystal, pure, no corrupting influence there ; next there is the throne of God and of the Lamb—here is something stable, God's will is done, we can rest on it ; then there is no more curse, but new creation blessing ; then His servants shall serve Him, we are free to serve Him, this began in Romans 12. 1, our reasonable service ; fifthly, we see His face, there is open vision ; next His name shall be in their foreheads—divine manifestation ; and lastly darkness is past—there is no night there. This is the consummation of what God has for us as to display. The bless-

ings are all to be seen in the great and high mountain.

Then follows, "Behold, I come quickly," and until that moment dawns the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us all. And what is this grace? It is the grace of the One who, though rich, became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. If His poverty has made us rich, what are His riches going to do?

We do not need more blessing, but more capacity to receive it, and we have to turn out in order to make room for it.

F. W. J.

THE YEAR OF RELEASE.

(DEUT. 15. 1, 2; 31. 10-13; LUKE 4. 16-21; 6. 17-19; 7. 36-50.)

IT is an occupation of pleasure to the renewed mind to trace the movements of divine love in the Person of Jesus, and so in Luke's gospel we may see these movements, all of which are to the glory of God and for the good of man. In chapter 4 the entering, the standing, the sitting, are full of interest. What He reads and what He^{sc} does not read are likewise significant. The entering the synagogue would suggest it was the spot where the Jews would congregate, and to them first the year of release is proclaimed from all that rested on them nationally as the result of disobedience and departure from God. *They* had not responded to the thought of the divine mind in Deuteronomy 15 and 31; indeed, they had nullified the word and made it of none effect (see Jer. 34. 8-16), and the year of release was not with them, nor could they give effect to it; they themselves were in bondage; their position was that of a debtor with nothing to

pay. It is to this condition of things that Jesus comes proclaiming deliverance to the captives, the acceptable year of the Lord, or as it says in Deuteronomy 15. 2, "the *Lord's* release," and in Deuteronomy 31. 10, "the solemnity of the year of release." Solemn indeed because it involves the whole sin, Satan and death question being taken up by Him and settled ere the year of release could be universally proclaimed. That is the present moment, so we may consider the activities of this holy Jesus who in His own Person was going to meet the whole claim, as He stands up to read; and let us note what He reads and what He does *not* read from the prophetic book. Then He sits down and we may with sympathetic ears and hearts listen to the gracious words that proceed out of His mouth as He began to say unto them, "This day is this scripture *fulfilled* in your ears." Good exercise for us to study Him as the fulfilment of all scripture, and that in all its blessed detail, and as we do so we are further impressed by those gracious words. But we may, if in the liberty of the year of release, follow Him as He moves out of the synagogue on the way that was to end in His death, and we may observe that the synagogue is not the limit of His service, and the plains (chap. 6) will shew that what was presented to the Jew first was for all, and so great crowds get deliverance, being set at liberty from bondage of one kind and another to move here in all the freedom that responsive love would suggest. And we may trace in chapter 7 the result to this kind for Himself in a woman who in her affection for the One who has brought the good news, brings her alabaster box of ointment to release it on those blessed feet whose movements have brought to her the thought

of the divine mind in the proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord. This is liberty, not so much for ourselves, great as the blessing is to us, but that He may have bondslaves who serve in all the liberty of love; and if the Simons give no water, no kiss, no oil, such as "this woman" give this and more, and get the word from His mouth, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

May we know more of the liberty of the year of release, and have desire to give effect in our small measure to this as we move each in our sphere among the saints. Under this influence we would not bind on any one or make demands. How often our attitude is "Pay me that thou owest," when we might have given expression to the word of Him who said, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke 6. 31.)

A. E. C.

LINES FROM AN INVALID'S NOTEBOOK.

"Thou holdest mine eyes_waking : I am so troubled that I cannot speak." (Psa. 77. 4.)

IT was during a long illness : I had been lying awake for hours very weary in mind and body, yet unable to sleep. I also seemed quite unable to use the time profitably, and I lay there getting more and more depressed.

I thought, in a miserable sort of way, God does not give *me* songs in the night, and I wondered how such a thing could be for any one restless and aching and ill, as I was.

I turned round painfully to look at the time, and then continued to look at my watch, or rather, the second hand, which is a long one, and goes round

from twelve to twelve in sixty seconds. As I watched it going round, I began to notice its shadow. I had a night-light, and every time the hand reached a certain spot, just opposite the light, there was no sign of its shadow ; the rays of light were shed equally on all sides of the hand ; but directly it moved farther from the light the shadow appeared.

As I lay watching it, new thoughts began to come. The shadow seemed to be a type of self, my "old man," and the night-light seemed to represent the light and love of God. I thought, As with the hand, its shadow is bound to appear the instant it is moved away from the light, so is it with me. My shadow, or self, is bound to be visible the moment I move from under the direct rays of the light and love of God. Self is there ready to crop up again, just like the shadow, but there is a spot where it is completely out of sight. Oh, to be always there, entirely gone from view, only CHRIST to be seen !

Only CHRIST, who is "The Sun of righteousness" ! I thought to myself, That is what deliverance is. I just need to keep exactly under the rays from above, and if completely encircled with the light and glow of that sunshine, there will be no room for self.

I realised then that the previous depressed thoughts were parts of my shadow, so I moved on quickly to thoughts of God's love and how wonderful He is. I knew then that He Himself *had* given me "songs in the night" after all, and my heart could sing in the middle of a night of pain. (Job 35. 10.)

"The Sun of Righteousness has come in grace,
Bright rays are round me, shining in the night ;
There is no shadow, when in Love's embrace,
And all is flooded with a heavenly light."

“ UNTIL HE COME.”

“Until the day break and the shadows flee away.”

ONLY a feeble few, but Thou art here ;
And Thy blest presence, Lord,
Our spirits cheer ;
For where Thou art, are life, and peace, and joy,
And blessedness—and love without alloy.

And hallowed is the place which Thou dost fill,
We learn behind our cares—
And every ill,
In Thee we find our rest, a glad retreat,
And bow our hearts in adoration meet.

Here too we see afresh Thy hands and side.
Thyself, once slain for us—
Now glorified,
Here we remember Thee, Thy dying love ;
That brought Thee e'en to death that love to prove.

Yea, in the midst Thou art to lead our praise,
Glad voices rise to Thee
In grateful lays,
We praise Thee, Lord, we worship, we adore,
And antedate that song on yonder shore.

Only a feeble few, but satisfied,
Sufficient is Thy grace
Whate'er betide,
And thus with all Thine own our comfort be,
“Until the day break, and the shadows flee.”

C. H.

TWO WONDERFUL COATS.

WHERE do we read of the first coat ever made ?
Who made it ? and who wore it ? We are
told in Genesis 3 the story of Adam's and Eve's sin,
how they disobeyed God and took of the fruit God
had forbidden. Then they knew that they had

TWO WONDERFUL COATS.

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sinned, and they wanted to get away from God ; they wanted to hide, and they tried to sew some fig leaves together to cover themselves. But God said, "Where art thou ? " and Adam was obliged to answer. Their fig leaves were no good, and they deserved to die.

Now after God told them of the results of their disobedience, bringing sorrow, and suffering, and death into the world, what did God do ? He made Adam and his wife coats of skin and clothed them. In order to make coats of skin, the blood of some animal must have been poured out. It says God made Adam and his wife "coats of skins, and clothed them." How good God was to provide a covering, a coat of skin, and to clothe them. But they had to accept the punishment of their sin ; they were turned out of the garden of Eden. When you gather a rose and the thorn pricks your finger, that is the result of sin, because thorns and thistles grow on account of it. (Gen. 3. 18.) If you see a man hot and tired and perspiring from hard work, you may remember that also is due to sin. Do you come across the lame, and the blind, and the sick ? This is also the result of sin. We must not forget that "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Now I want to ask you, Have you been clothed ? Do you need a covering ? Yes, indeed, the Lamb of God shed His precious blood for you, and God provides a robe of righteousness for all those who believe in Him. In the case of the prodigal son the father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him."

The second coat I should like to write about was no

doubt a very beautiful one ; it is called the coat of many colours, or coat with sleeves, and it was given to Joseph by his father Jacob.

Why was this ? It was because Israel, the father, loved him more than all his sons on account of him being the son of his old age. But Joseph's brethren hated him for this reason, and were not friendly to him. Now, do you know what became of this beautiful coat ? It is sad to tell that when Israel sent Joseph to see where his brethren were, they cast him into a pit, having stripped him of his coat or vest of many colours. Later on, having sold Joseph to the Midianitish merchants, they took his coat, and having slaughtered a kid of the goats, they dipped the coat in the blood and carried it to their father, who said, "It is my son's coat," and his father wept for him.

Now of what are we reminded in this wonderful picture ? Joseph is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom God spoke saying, "This is my beloved Son." The beautiful colours in the coat or vest speak to us of the beautiful life of our Lord displayed in His pathway, and in so many other ways, as He went about down here ; this beautiful life He gave up in order to carry out God's purposes of blessing for man.

In Psalm 22 we find a reference to the Lord's garments ; it says, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." (Ver. 18.)

The brethren of Joseph hated him. Why ? It was because his father loved him ; they hated him because they were wicked, and envious, and wished to kill him. So with the Jews, they hated Jesus, as He says Himself, "They hated me without a cause." (John 15. 25.) "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him,

to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John. 1. 11, 12.)

What a blessed thing it is to have a covering fit for God, as the Psalmist says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." (Psa. 32. 1.) Should not all who are thus covered desire to display some of the many colours shewn in the beautiful ways of the Lord when down here, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world ?

C. E. H.

THE PURPOSES OF GOD IN CREATION.—No. 1.

MOST of us are familiar with the details of the creation as set forth in Genesis 1, which must be accepted as true historical facts, written by the Spirit of God, and therefore not subject to the teachings and criticisms of men, who in their so-called wisdom often seek to prove that this record is not true, but who can never state anything definite or conclusive, their theories changing with each successive generation. The wisdom of man must ever be subject to the word of God, which never changes, and can never be refuted. With all the opposition, it still remains the same, and gives the soul a sure and definite ground on which to believe. Yet it is of greater importance to see the foundation truths and purposes of God enfolded in this chapter, giving an outline of His thoughts from eternity, through time, to eternity.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This is definite, and admits of no argument. We might ask, When was the beginning ? but let our small minds travel back, even thousands

or millions of years, the fact remains that in the beginning God was, and He created the heavens and the earth. The New Testament sheds light on the Old, and reveals the mind and purposes of God, the principles of which never change from Genesis to Malachi and from Matthew to Revelation, so we see a consistency in all His ways, and realise that the whole Bible has but one author—God.

When a master-builder proposes to build, he considers first the plan of what he is going to build, and the purpose of the building, so that before God created the world He had His purposes and He knoweth the end from the beginning. We read in Ephesians, "We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," and in Colossians, "All things have been created by him and for him." All the works of God are perfect, but when we come to verse 2, the earth is not perfect, but without form and void. It did not leave the hand of God so, but what caused the disorder we are not told, nor how long a time elapsed between the first and second verses. It may be thousands or millions of years, but God commences to bring out of the chaos and disorder a condition of things in accordance with His original purposes. It was not His purpose that darkness should cover the scene, so the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, "Let there be light: and there was light." God created man perfect, but how long he remained so before he fell we are not told, but when he fell he brought in a scene of darkness and death. Such was not in the purposes of God, so there is activity on the part of God. He does not leave man to grope in the darkness, to remain without God and without hope. Man is

totally unable to undo the evil or to dispel the darkness, but God comes in and His Spirit moves. He has caused the light of His glory to shine in the face of Jesus Christ, who has brought in the knowledge of God to lighten the moral darkness. He is the true Light. God has a remedy for the condition of things, and His purposes cannot be frustrated, so the soul who looks to Jesus is brought out of darkness into light, and out of the sphere where sin and death reign. He finds all the question of his sins met and of that order which caused the darkness and death, and is able to walk in the full light of God's day. God makes a complete separation between the two spheres, separating light from darkness, calling the light Day and the darkness Night. We are called children of light and of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. (1 Thess. 5. 5.) So at the present time there are two spheres, two classes of people, those in the light and those in the darkness, believers and unbelievers, and light can have no fellowship with darkness, nor a believer with an unbeliever. It is significant to note that there is no more mention of the night or of darkness, except to where the night is placed under the rule of the lesser light. It is the evening and the morning which constitutes the day. So it is with us when by faith we trust in Jesus, all our night passes away. There may be clouds to dim the brightness, but the night is for ever past. We start with the evening, but the light increases as we move on, until we come to the morning, to the fulness of the knowledge of God.

The next step God takes is to divide the waters under the firmament from the waters above, and God made the firmament which He called Heaven,

bringing before us our heavenly calling and of the place prepared for us in the Father's house ; also we see that all things are in the control of Him who made all things, so that the waters which covered the earth in judgment are in complete subjection to God. When we come to the third day, they are made to yield up that which they covered, and at the command of God they are gathered to one place and the dry land appears, and from that land there are all the fruits of the resurrection. Death gives up its prey, and though there is the restless and never-ending activity of the waters, called the Seas, they are in complete control. Christ has been into death, and come out as the dry, or firm, ground. So we have a sure foundation, no more to tread miry clay, but firmly established on a rock. Death will never again have dominion, and we have that which speaks of Christ out of death, and what He brings in for God, the grass, referring to His humanity, the herb yielding seed, as the corn of wheat which bears seed of its own order, so that there is a generation which is of the same order as the One who has been into and come out of death. This speaks of the great number that are all of one, the many sons, but in the tree yielding fruit, whose seed is in itself, there is the thought of the one body, the one company, not as separate grains, but one complete unit, Christ the vine, we the branches, bearing fruit for the pleasure of God.

C. D-E.

BIBLE STUDY FOR MARCH.

SUBJECT : TRUTH.

What is truth ?

The Roman governor, Pilate, asked this question of the Lord, but he did not wait for an answer, but immediately left the judg-

ment hall. Just prior to this the Lord had given His disciples the answer, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life,*" therefore it is impossible to separate truth from Him.

Romans 1. 25 speaks of "the truth of God" in contrast to "a lie," and all through scripture there is that which God calls "the truth."

The Psalmist exclaims: "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth" (Psa. 31. 5), and in Psalm 117, "The truth of the Lord endureth for ever." It is therefore divine and everlasting, above all the ideas and opinions of men, and comprises all that may be known of God, and, as the Lord Jesus is the revelation of God to us, He is the truth.

The truth of God is not to be merely held as a doctrine, but to be received into our souls. David prays, "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me" (refer), and Paul spoke to the Galatians about obeying the truth. (Refer.) Thus, if we have God's truth presented to us and accept it, it will mark us in our every action and word, and we shall be found, like the children John speaks of in his epistle, "walking in truth." By nature our hearts are deceitful above all things, but, in His children, God desires *truth* in the inward parts, and this can only be so in the measure that we know Him who is the truth.

QUESTIONS.

1. Lovingkindness, light, meekness, and mercy are each connected with truth in the Psalms. (Psa. 40-60.) Find the verses, learn, and then write from memory.

2. Quote with references the passages where the Holy Ghost is spoken of as the Spirit of truth.

3. What can we learn from what John tells us of truth in his first epistle?

[Replies to be sent to "*LENA*," Grasmere, Burgess Hill, Sussex.]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I'm so glad the subject for the first month of this year has been so enjoyed. It is indeed a great thing to realise a little the extent of God's blessing culminating for those who love Him in: "Blessed . . . with *all spiritual blessings* in the heavenlies in Christ." (Eph. 1. 3.) What can we want more?—"all spiritual blessings." It makes us very conscious of our own unworthiness of God's bountiful bestowings, doesn't it?

I think the yearly results are very good, and it was a difficult matter to know where to draw any line, as the difference between any two consecutive students is so slight, so I hope all will feel cheered and encouraged in starting another year.

In correcting January's replies I miss some dear familiar hand-writings, those, too, of students who did so well last year. Probably special pressure of some kind prevented their sending, but I shall look eagerly to see papers from them in future months.

Yours affectionately, LENA.

LIST OF REPLIES TO QUESTIONS ON "BLESSING."

Class 1.—Cissy Allison,* Mary Brown, Elsie Buckley, Eric Cameron, Winnie Dunham,* Grace Eayrs, Elsie Francis, Nora Huson, Robert Ireland, Leslie Jessup, Eliz. Millar, Dorothy Moorhouse, Ruth Musson,* Mary Potts, Irene Pratt, Ruth Railton,* Grace Railton,* Mary Railton, Nellie Railton,* Ethel Schneider, Kathleen Suckling, George Palmer, Eleanor Tedbury,* Albert Tipler,* Freda Watts, Mildred Watson.

Class 2.—Dorothy Boggis, Gwendoline Church, Elsie Evered, Muriel Lloyd, Arthur Potts, Irene Rusling, Henry Palmer, Edna Storey, Freda Parker, Evelyn Thorstensen, Isabel Turnbull.

Late for October, 1923.—*Class 1.*—Priscilla, Isabella, Herbert and Donald Walker (*Australia*).

Class 2.—Grace McPhee (*Australia*).

BIBLE STUDY FOR 1923.

LIST OF MERIT.

Those who have gained 1st Class on *each* exercise throughout the year :—

1.	Grace Eayrs	11 distinctions.
1.	Willie Eayrs	11 „
2.	Cecil Eayrs	6 „
3.	Nora Huson	5 „
3.	Grace Railton	5 „
4.	Cissy Allison	4 „
4.	Mary Brown	4 „
5.	Charis Bazlinton	3 „
6.	Winnie Dunham	2 „

The other students who have continued throughout the year in order of merit :—

7.	Albert Tipler	11	1st Class.	9 distinctions.
8.	Kathleen Tipler	11	„	5 „
9.	Dorothy Moorhouse	10	„	2 „
10.	Mildred Watson	10	„	1 „
11.	Freda Watts	9	„	3 „
12.	Ethel Schneider	9	„	2 „
13.	Nellie Railton	8	„	3 „
14.	Elizabeth Millar	7	„	3 „
15.	Eleanor Tedbury	7	„	1 „
16.	Robert Ireland	7	„	0 „
17.	Edna Storey	6	„	2 „
18.	Irene Rusling	6	„	0 „
19.	Muriel Lloyd	5	„	1 „

N.B.—We are hoping to send our students, down to, and including, No. 12, a little recognition of their careful and intelligent study in the course of a few days.

THE MAN OF GOD—IGDALIAH.

(JER. 35. 4.)

OF Igdaliah, who in the verse at the head of our paper is spoken of as a man of God, we have but little recorded. He had a chamber in the house of the Lord, and the thought of the word "chamber" is doubtless akin to that of the many mansions, or abodes, of which the Lord spoke in John 14. What a privileged place to have a chamber in, and near by the chamber of the keeper of the door, the significance of which we were speaking of last month.

The Rechabites who were tested in the chamber of the man of God were those who had separated themselves from following after that which ministered worldly joy and prosperity. There came a moment when *all* the house of the Rechabites were put to the test as to whether their separation was merely an idea or whether it was a soul reality. The test did not come in or from the world, but in the chamber of the man of God and from Jeremiah, of the priestly family, who had himself stood for God through many a test.

We live in such days. We have many a test in and from the world, as Abraham of old had, but there is another kind of test comes to all who seek in any way to be separated to God, tests which probe us, tests which are allowed of God to bring to light the measure of our faithfulness and the devotedness of our separation. I say *our* because this is not an individual test, but the test of a company, "the whole house of the Rechabites." Rechab means companionship. How

E

blessed to have been given a place with such a company and to find ourselves tested in a place that had been marked by the presence of a man of God.

The incident shews that the sons of Rechab had a desire to be true to that to which they had committed themselves. Many around, doubtless some marked by piety, would be drinking of earthly joys, and going in for good things down here suggested by houses and vineyards, but for themselves the pathway of obedience meant the refusal of all these things and the maintenance of their stranger and pilgrim character—they were dwellers in tents.

Were they losers by their faithfulness? When the enemy is abroad in the land they dwell at Jerusalem, and the Lord says, "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever."

Shall we be losers by following the example of the Rechabites? Surely not! We shall find that fasting is feasting, a paradox truly, but a deep reality. The feasting for us is the appropriation of Christ as the food of our souls and the "companionship" of the people of God—we shall then prove the truth of the word in Proverbs 8: "I cause them that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." These are the things that will keep us going, things to live upon and to live in. Then the fasting will not be difficult, for the inward feasting will be our power to maintain the outward fasting. May we in the strength and power of Another ever say "No" to the temptation to occupation of heart with the wine, the houses and the vineyards which keep us to earth and tie us down to things here. J. R. T.

THE BIBLE—2 SAMUEL.

THERE is a striking difference between the first Book of Samuel and the second. In the first we have David as the rejected king and his faith is prominent, as also the faith of those who identified themselves with him and could recognise in the rejected man Jehovah's anointed. In the second book David reigns, and hence his power and rule are tested. He owns at the end of the book (chap. 23. 3-5) that what the ruler over men *ought* to be—what Christ *will* be—his house had not been. However, many beautiful features shine in David.

David in 2 Samuel is a type of Christ in many ways, as he was in the first. Christ as our Ruler ; but his personal history warns us of our own failures, and these failures are not at all like Christ.

There is great moral dignity in David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan. I wonder if we have ever wept over the disastrous ruin of Israel, and, too, of the professing church—both of which should have been for God's glory ? David's words regarding Abner also (chap. 3. 38) teach us how, if with God, we should mourn the loss of many men who have failed through the serious blunders they made in divine things.

Notice that David's kingdom is first at Hebron. Observe the places : Ziklag, Hebron and Jerusalem. Things are recovered at Ziklag ; all Israel profess their link with David as king in Hebron ; and he is king in *power* in Jerusalem.

If we publicly give Christ a place we shall find Satan will stir up opposition. Hence the Philistine comes

against David, but this only affords him an opportunity to shew his power and dependence.

A great feature in David's life is the value he placed on the ark of God. His feelings are beautifully described in Psalm 132. What a lesson to us of devotedness! Yet 2 Samuel 6 contains a salutary warning. In handling divine things we must do so in God's way. To imitate man would never do. This is what professing Christendom has done. David's failure brought judgment. God will be hallowed in all who come near to Him. (Lev. 10. 3.) The ark was left in the house of Obed-Edom. Blessing as well as holiness mark God, and hence Obed-Edom's house is blessed. What a privilege is it to-day to recognise God in our houses and make room for Christ. The second time David seeks the ark he observes divine order. (See also 1 Chron. 15. 2, 13.) If only we seek to give Christ His right place, what a lot God can say to us. Notice how God speaks of David and Solomon, who are types of Christ, and David (that is, Christ) speaks of his people. Think of Christ saying, "With thy blessing, let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever." (Chap. 7.)

After this David vanquishes the Philistines. Victory at every turn marks him. (Chap. 8.)

Kindness marks God's rule as well as power. So we find chapter 9 comes in. What a place the kindness of God gives us. Eternity will everlastingly shew "the exceeding riches of God's grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." Man's heart, however, tries to get rid of the rule of God (chap. 8), and refuses His kindness. (Chap. 10.) What judgment must follow! (Chap. 10. 15-19.)

The next chapters record David's failure. What

a warning to us all ! God puts away his sin on confession, but David has to suffer under the government of God. (Chap. 12. 7–15.) What awful sorrow sin brings.

Joab is a morally weak element in David's kingdom. He was a clever and capable man full of diplomacy ; but he had no holy sensibilities or feelings. (Chap. 14.) When David kissed Absalom the justice of his throne was gone. David suffers bitterly. Psalm 3 refers to chapter 15. 13, etc. Sometimes our failures make us feel, and other people say, It is no use turning to God ; this is your own fault. Psalm 3. 2, 3 may encourage us ; we can always turn to God !

Is it not beautiful to see Ittai's loyalty to David ? (Chap. 15. 21.) Can we all say to Christ, "In what place my lord . . . shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be" ! Romans 6. 11 is like this.

Jehovah's anointed must prevail. Absalom is slain, and it was a great sorrow to David's heart.

In chapter 19. 9–43 we find cases of deep interest : Shimei, Mephibosheth and Barzillai. Shimei's early welcome and confession saved his life. He is to abide in Jerusalem in Solomon's day. He loses his life in the end. How necessary for us quickly to own our failure ! Mephibosheth had truly felt David's absence. But why had he not gone with David ? Had he only *one* servant and *one* ass ? After this he has only half his previous possessions. (Ver. 29.) Both Ziba and Mephibosheth are to be viewed with appreciation and both as failing. The coming (that is, the judgment seat) of Christ will accurately estimate our every act. Barzillai is another case. He had helped David greatly (ver. 32), but he has grown old and does not care to go to Jerusalem with David. It is sad for us

if we ever get spiritually old ! The end of the chapter paves the way for the bad element of Sheba. (Chap. 20.)

What value a wise woman is ! It is wisdom we so much need. It will save a city and preserve the Lord's inheritance by judging evil. (Chap. 20. 15-21.) Are *we* allowing anything against *our* David, Christ ?

Two more things occur : the famine and the numbering of the people. Religious flesh always errs. Saul's action is this. (Ver. 1.) We must judge this ! Saul's sons must die.

Why did David want to number the people ? This was a searching question. (Chap. 24. 3.) How often pride lurks in our hearts ! But David is recovered and he always trusts God. "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord ; for his mercies are great."

What mercies are God's indeed. He can even turn our failures to blessing, leading us to appreciate Christ the more. A sacrifice to God is the eventual result of David's failure. (Chap. 24. 25.)

I have not referred to David's song. (Chap. 22.) Can we all recount God's ways with us ? Do they lead us to value Christ more ? What a day it will be when the only perfect Ruler over men reigns ! A day ushered in by a morning without clouds ! (Chap. 23. 4.) The Lord haste that day !

M. W. B.

YOKEFELLOWS.

ONE of the greatest expressions of the Lord's present care for His own in these last days is that He has given to those who desire to follow Him companions with whom to walk. He does not call His disciples to tread the path of discipleship alone. There are those who are "yoked together" in true affection

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to Himself who can thus move and act as "yoke-fellows."

It is not a denominational bond that binds them; nor any sectarian yoke. Each one has responded to the Lord's own invitation: "Take MY yoke upon you, and learn of ME; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For MY yoke is easy, and MY burden is light." Such are delivered from other yokes, which, being contrary to God, lead to sorrow, bondage and spiritual disaster.

The word of God furnishes some beautiful examples of yokefellowes, which are worthy of consideration.

* * * * *

The *three mighty men* of 2 Samuel 23, 14-17 were yoked together in true affection for David.

They were characterised by real

FIDELITY

to God's Anointed. They had come to David in their distress. They had become attached to him; and they kept near enough to him to catch the breathings of his heart when he said, "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!"

And those mighty men together broke through the host of the Philistines. They were not commanded to do it. They acted in affection, for they were set upon gratifying the desire of David, and they did it.

How deeply his heart was moved by the self-sacrificing devotion that thus expressed their love for him. They put their lives in jeopardy to secure refreshment for him. It was a unique moment in David's life.

The desires of the Lord Jesus have been expressed

in the institution of His supper, but it is not as in obedience to a command that He would have us partake of it. It is intensely gratifying to Him when as the outcome of deep affection and true devotedness to Himself, His own respond to the longings of His heart. He loves to see us sit down together, having broken through the hosts of religious ceremonies and prejudices and having secured what is so exceedingly refreshing to His heart that He can pour it out before God.

* * * * *

The *three faithful men* of Daniel 3. 23-25 were yoke-fellows in

SUFFERING.

The most severe test had come upon them. The issue was clear—idolatry or death! But together they stood while every one else bowed to the golden image. Shoulder to shoulder, as “true yokefellow” they fearlessly faced the wrath of that fierce and despotic monarch. How they must have valued each other in that hour of trial! Exiled together they had purposed to walk together in separation from evil (chap. 1); they had prayed together (chap. 2); and now they are witnessing together, prepared to suffer together. (Chap. 3.)

What a delight to God to see those three young men standing in faithfulness to Himself! No wonder He miraculously delivered them and is declared through all the world as “the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.”

What compensation was theirs in the suffering! They had the company of the Son of God in the midst of the fire. In wondrous grace He identified Him-

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self with His suffering ones and gave them the deepest of all joys—to have His presence with them in the fiery furnace.

* * * * *

The *three chosen men* of Luke 9. 28–36, Peter, James, and John, were taken by the Lord when He went up into a mountain to pray. Led by Him above the level of earthly things they are with Him, and there they experience the sweetness of being yoked together in

BEHOLDING

His glory, for “as he prayed the fashion of his countenance became different and his raiment white and effulgent . . . but having fully awoke up they saw his glory.” How exceeding great this is—to be together in the presence of His glory. Surely the same Lord would conduct us so that “we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.”

* * * * *

The *three fearless men* of 2 Corinthians 1. 19 were yoked together in the preaching of Christ at Corinth. They all bore witness, wrote the apostle, to “the Son of God, Jesus Christ, he who has been preached by us among you (by me and Silvanus and Timotheus).” They were yokefellow in

SERVICE.

How greatly the apostle valued all his companions is evidenced by his references to them. Of Epaphroditus he says, “my brother and fellow-workman and fellow-soldier” (Phil. 2. 25); of another, “my true yokefellow,” but with what joy must he have re-

corded the special testimony of those of his co-workers who preached with him the Son of God.

* * * * *

May we each be encouraged to be true to the fellowship of God's Son, that we may be "yokefellows" indeed.

"O patient, spotless One !
Our hearts in meekness train,
Thy yoke, and learn of Thee,
That we may rest obtain."

F. S. M.

THE PURPOSES OF GOD IN CREATION.—No. 2

THE three days we looked at in our previous paper reveal that which is Godward, what God has wrought for the establishment of His purposes ; then in the fourth day it shews how the position that has been secured is maintained and its outward testimony. God prepares lights to maintain the division between the day and the night, and He made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day. God has raised up Jesus and made Him both Lord and Christ. He has glorified Him and set Him at His own right hand, all authority and power being vested in Him, and we of the day own His lordship and rule. We are governed and controlled by Him and walk in His light. He is not exercising His authority in regard to the world, but all the light which can reach the world is through the church, the lesser light which rules the night, for while the church is here, the powers of darkness are restrained. All the light of the moon is directly derived from the sun, so we can but shew forth the glory of the One whom God has exalted and glorified. The moon speaks

of the collective testimony of the church, the stars of the individual testimony. Christ said to His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." That is the church in its completeness, but when the failure had come in, the apostle addresses the saints as those "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights" (Phil. 2. 15), that is, as stars.

Now that Christ has been raised and glorified, the Holy Spirit has come down, so in the fifth day there is the activity of life, the well of water springing up into everlasting life. The Lord said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," so we are brought into the enjoyment of life in perpetual motion by the power of the Holy Spirit, and death can have no more dominion over us, but in the midst of a scene marked by death we are in life, free to roam through the whole sphere of God's universe, of which Christ is the living Centre, free as those who wait upon the Lord to renew our strength, to mount up with wings as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. (Isa. 40. 30, 31.)

We also see that all that is needed for the sustenance and maintenance of the testimony is provided by God, so that there is no lack, but a full sufficiency to carry it and us right to the end, when God shall have His purposes obtained and we shall be conformed to the image of His Son, for it is His purpose to have man in His own image and likeness, both male and female. It is Christ Himself who is the express image of His person, and it is the church, the bride, which shall be like Him, so the bridegroom and the bride are seen together. There is the universal

dominion of Christ, and the bride reigns with Him. Everything is subject to Him and comes in for blessing. We have Christ for our portion and all that He has secured in resurrection, the herb yielding seed and the tree yielding fruit, verse 29 being the same as verse 11, except for the grass, or His humanity.

The living creatures have their portion in every green herb, that is, they come into the blessing of all that Christ has effected by becoming flesh, and they come into the glorious liberty of the children of God ; for it is written, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isa. 65. 25), and God, surveying all, pronounces it as very good. This takes us to the end of time. Then the seventh day ushers in an order of things to which there is no end. There were the evening and the morning from the first to the sixth day, but now there is no limit. It is an eternal day of bliss, where God finds His perfect rest. Everything is sanctified, and Christ, having delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and He, the Son, also subject to the Father, God is all in all. (1 Cor. 15. 24-28.) C. D-E.

THE SANCTIFIED COMPANY.

(HEB. 2. 11, 12.)

"NOT ashamed to call them brethren" !
 Why ? Because they're all of One ;
 One with Him—the Sanctifier,
 God's exalted, glorious Son.

"Not ashamed to call them brethren" !
 Marvellous the blessing theirs !
 Chosen 'ere the world's foundation,
 Sons of God, and Christ's co-heirs.

“ PART WITH ME.”

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“Not ashamed to call them brethren” !
 Cherished as the Father’s gift ;
 Drawn to Him by love’s attraction :
 Holy hands to heaven they lift.

“Not ashamed to call them brethren” !
 Joyful songs they love to raise,
 Worshipping His God and Father ;
 In their midst He leads the praise.

“Not ashamed to call them brethren” !
 Oh, the joy of *knowing* this !
 Now, and through th’ eternal ages,
 Glory, power, and praise be His !

J. J. H.

“ PART WITH ME.”

(JOHN 13.)

IT was on that memorable night when they were at supper with Christ, that Jesus in the deep devotion of His heart condescended to stoop down and wash His disciples’ feet. There they all were shut in with Himself, so to speak, from all around, when “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments ; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.” (John 13. 4, 5.) Think of the Lord of glory girding Himself to be servant to His disciples ! What condescending grace ! He had before Him that death of shame on Calvary’s cross where He was soon to suffer judgment from the hand of God, and God’s forsaking on account of that awful burden of our sins which He was to bear ; and in view of this He stoops to serve His own in this unique way. And He remains a Servant for ever !

We read in the word of that coming day of glory when He will come forth to serve His own. What a dear Lord we have ! And then we see that in this action His desire is that we shall follow His example, in our measure, and serve one another.

“Ye call me Master and Lord : and ye say well ; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master [or Teacher], have washed your feet ; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13. 13, 14.)

Whilst actually on earth we have a very special place in the love of God and of Christ ; there is nothing Jewish about it—nothing connected with the twelve tribes—it is an out-of-the-world condition of things.

We are always encouraged to consider one another in the light of Christ and to act like Him. The Lord never even exposed Judas until he exposed himself. The Lord knew all the way along what was going to happen, but He was superior to it all.

If you have a taste of the love of Christ and the love of those given to Christ, nothing suits you more than to be constantly in the enjoyment of these things, and if you drop down there is a disappointment until you get back to them again.

We love to look into the faces of our brethren, knowing that they also share with us in this precious enjoyment of Christ and of the Father, and if any fall below this we love to help such and to encourage them.

One can quite understand Peter saying, “ Lord, dost thou wash my feet ? ” He could not understand the idea of the Lord humbling Himself to stoop down and wash his feet ; but we see this act was necessary, for Jesus answered him, “ If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” (John 13. 8.)

ACCESS TO GOD.

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There is no such thing in the heavenly circle as will, pride, self-importance, or an overbearing spirit; there is no thought of any one pushing himself forward. Whatever would he want to push himself forward for? He would desire Christ to have the foremost place.

These few verses before us are of great importance in a day like the present, when we see what wonderful privileges are ours as Christians, even here, and thus are awaiting the higher privilege still of "beholding his glory."

H. D'A. C.

ACCESS TO GOD.

"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." (Matt. 27. 51.)

THIS took place at the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Briefly stated, as so often God's word is, yet how significant. The truth it teaches abolishes the whole present-day system of priesthood.

Have you ever considered the rent veil: who rent it, and when, and what it means?

God Himself rent the veil. Man truly had part in putting Jesus to death. They reviled and mocked Him. He suffered ignominy and shame at their hands. "By wicked hands he was crucified and slain." (Acts 2. 23.) But God was there also. He suffered there at the hand of God. It was to God Jesus addressed that bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27. 46.) Elsewhere He ever addressed His Father. But here, the holy and righteous God, the holy, sinless Man, Jesus; God as a Judge, sin before Him—judged in the Person of Jesus. Who can tell what it meant to Jesus to be forsaken of God! Un-

fathomable cry ! All because of sin. There we learn how awful sin is to God. "Darkness covered the land." No creature could penetrate all Calvary's deep meaning. And judgment, too, is God's strange work. (Isa. 28. 21.) It was when Jesus died that the veil of the temple was rent. God did it. It was His answer to the death of Christ. The veil shut man away from the holiest—the presence of God. Man could not come before God, in His presence, unless for judgment. How could a sinner approach God ? Impossible.

Disobedient Adam was banished from Eden. "Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God [symbol of His presence] . . . and God smote him there for his error." (2 Sam. 6. 7.) When Isaiah heard the seraphim ascribe holiness to Jehovah, he said, "Woe is me !" (Isa. 6.) And Jesus vindicated God, even when forsaken on the cross. "But thou art holy." (Psa. 22. 1-3.)

There, at the cross, sin in all its awfulness was before God, there the judgment of it, and there removed from God's sight. Sin has gone from before God in the judgment of it. What stood between God and man was there removed on God's part : "the veil was rent." God now comes out to man to bless, and man can draw near to God. Marvellous testimony to the value of Christ's death. Can the soul be longer troubled as to sin or sins seeing how Jesus has answered the whole question ?

That unique, perfect life of Jesus here on earth did not put away sin. It was His death that rent the veil. "He hath . . . put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9. 26.)

Sin gone, the way is open for man to have access to God. Yes, direct access, no priest between. What

perfect efficacy in the work of Christ ! Listen to Peter, the apostle to the Jews. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3. 18.) Brought to God. What a word to a Jew, accustomed to the distance occasioned by a priesthood that was divinely sanctioned. But now direct access to God. All believers are priests, all brought to God, as Peter also shews. (1 Peter 2. 5.) And to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles also. "Yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight." So he wrote to the believers at Colosse. (Col. 1. 21, 22.)

Alas ! man presumes to draw near to God indifferent to his sin. Presumption indeed ! And thus he sets aside the necessity for Christ's death. So did Cain. And scripture foretells of those to-day who walk in the way of Cain. (Jude 11.) Abel's sacrifice recognised the death of Another, pointing thus to Jesus. Then, on the other hand, men instituting a priesthood maintain a distance, when all distance is removed through Christ's death, and man brought in Him risen into the nearness in which He is now before God. But faith treasures God's word infinitely above all the thoughts of men. Faith lays hold of the truth that the rent veil teaches and rejoices in such a God. Faith receives God's grace—all the fulness of it—and adores Him.

And now, reader, are you in the secret of the rent veil ? How inestimably blessed to know and enjoy to-day direct access to God.

S. P. F.

TRADING.

HOW important is the Lord's word to His bondmen in Luke 19. 13 : "Trade while I am coming" (New Trans.), and to remember that when the Lord returns He will require to know what *every one* has gained by *trading*. We have each received from the Lord some impression of Himself. And this is bound to find an expression both in our manner of life and also our words, unless we hinder it. The result is that we long to meet other believers likewise impressed, and we find that in speaking together the others have quite distinct thoughts of the Lord Jesus, and we get a little further knowledge of Him through them ; whilst they on their part are helped and cheered by us. So that in parting each have added to their spiritual capital. This is wonderfully stimulating and gives us a desire for more of these opportunities. We find the truth of Proverbs 11. 24 : "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is right, but it tendeth only to want." 2 Peter 1. 5 speaks of adding to our faith, virtue, knowledge, etc.

It is important to see that we have each some spiritual capital, which can only be increased by trading with others with similar wealth. That is mutual interchange of thought. The Lord does not wish us to put our wealth in the bank to let others do the trading whilst we are idle. We must notice, too, what the bondmen say in Luke 19 : "Lord, *thy pound* hath gained ten pounds," or, " five pounds." It is not what they had done so much, but the natural outcome of putting their wealth into circulation.

It does its own work, although the Lord is pleased to say, "Well done, thou good bondman."

Would you not, dear reader, covet to hear this? Our blessed Lord has given you and me the privilege of thus adding to His glory and joy. Are we using what we have? It may seem small to us, but if we just let it take its own course we shall soon find out the joy of trading. He is about to return, when our opportunities will be over. May the Lord give us to hear His voice afresh, "Trade while I am coming."

W. J. W.

BIBLE STUDY FOR APRIL.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

Although scripture refers to physical light and darkness, as in Isaiah 45. 7: "I form the light, and create darkness," the terms are largely used in a moral sense and are strongly contrasted. Moral darkness is the state of man consequent on the fall, well described in Psalm 82. 5: "They know not, neither will they understand; *they walk on in darkness.*"

God is *light* and in Him is no darkness at all; therefore, all that is opposed to Him must partake of moral darkness. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world as the true Light which lighteth every man, but so great was the moral darkness that the perfect Light was not understood.

Light has two missions at least—

(1) It dispels gloom and darkness, and the stronger the light the further it pierces into the darkness, shewing up in its true colours "the works of darkness."

(2) It brings strength, health and vigour of soul that produces fruitfulness to God.

Believers are spoken of as "light in the Lord," although they were formerly "darkness," and are exhorted to walk as children of light. (Eph. 5. 8.) Since Christ, the true Light, is risen and ascended, believers in Him have the great privilege and responsibility of shining as lights in this scene of darkness, reflecting something of the lustre that should characterise those who have had their hearts illuminated by "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4. 6, 7.)

Let us see to it that in some measure, at least, we who are divinely illuminated *do* shine.

It is interesting to look out all the passages where light and

darkness are contrasted. One or two have been referred to but there are several others.

Write a short essay answering the question, "What communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6. 14.)

[*Replies to be sent to "LENA," Grasmere, Burgess Hill, Sussex.*]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

In spite of the solemnity of the subject, I hope you all found February's study helpful.

I feel we are often apt to take God's temporal blessings and favours as common everyday occurrence without sufficient thought or gratefulness, so that it is well occasionally to have a look at the other side, which increases by contrast the marvellousness of God's favour and lovingkindness to such as ourselves.

I know this in considering the present working out in detail of our two subjects, "Blessing" and "Curse," but I was glad so many students referred in their essays to Balaam being hired by the heathen king Balak to curse God's people and the triumph of God in *compelling* his unwilling lips to *bless* instead of *curse*. God is ever faithful to His own and none can reverse *His* blessings; no power on earth can alter it. His blessing is like a protecting wall enclosing in perfect peace and safety all who trust in Him. Oh, the joy of belonging to that company!

I am very glad to receive papers from some new students and hope they will have courage to persevere throughout the year (D.V.).

Will each one please remember to write his address at the top of the first sheet of paper used.

Yours, with love in our Lord Jesus,
LENA.

SUBJECT: THE CURSE.

Class 1.—Cissy Allison, Hilda Bush, Mary Brown,* Elsie Buckley,* Winnie Dunham,* Grace Eayrs,* Nora Huson, Robert Ireland,* Eliz. Millar, Isabel Mayo, Ruth Musson,* Rosie Noakes, Olive Norris, Charles Nunnerley, Grace Railton,* Nellie Railton, Mary Railton, Shirley Roberts, Irene Rusling, Ethel Schneider,* Edna Storey, Kathleen Suckling, George Palmer,* Eleanor Tedbury, Albert Tipler,* Freda Watts,* Mildred Watson.

Class 2.—Gwendoline Church, Elsie Evered, Muriel Lloyd, Henry Palmer, Freda Parker.

Late for January.—*Class 1.*—Isabel Mayo, Rosie Noakes, Charles Nunnerley. *Class 2.*—Hilda Bush.

Late for November.—*Class 1.*—Grace McPhee (Australia).

THE MAN OF GOD.

(JUDGES 13.)

WHEN beginning our papers on the man of God it was our hope to meditate upon the seven men who are brought before us and named as such in the Old Testament, and Timothy in the New Testament, but we now feel the subject would be incomplete were we not briefly to notice, within the compass of three or four papers, the six occasions when men of God are alluded to in the scriptures without their names being given.

The incident brought before us in the passage at the head of this paper is unique. There can be no question that the One who appears to Manoah is Jehovah Himself, and that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the One known to us as the Jesus of the gospels, and the One who revealed Himself to Saul of Tarsus as the glorified Christ. This, of course, is not the only occasion when the blessed Son of God manifested Himself to His own in Old Testament times. There is the well-known incident when Jehovah appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, and when He is seen in company with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the midst of the fire.

Here the Man of God appears to Manoah and to his wife in relation to the birth of Samson, and when asked His name replies, "How is it that thou askest after my name, seeing it is wonderful?" The story is a simple one. The wife of Manoah was no doubt exercised, and the Lord took account of her exercises

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and came to her with the announcement of the birth of a son, tidings which she and her husband evidently believed, for we next find Manoah praying to Jehovah that the Man of God whom He had sent might come again and instruct them as to what they should do unto the child. Confidence in God marked Manoah, which turned him to prayer and dependence upon God for wisdom to rightly act towards the expected gift. God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah. When confidence in and dependence upon God mark us does God ever act otherwise ?

Manoah then tries to detain the Man of God, not knowing He was the Angel of Jehovah, but is told, "If thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord." In obedience Manoah took the kid and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord, and as the flame went up the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar, thus doing wondrously.

In this way the disclosure of the secret name is made. Truly a wonderful picture or foreshadowing of the devotedness of Him, the true Burnt Offering, whose life was consumed in the accomplishment of His Father's will, and who, as it were, disappeared in the fragrance of the ascending flame. The sight brought Manoah and his wife to the ground, and whilst Manoah says, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God," his wife had moved on from the fact of having seen God to the deeper and most blessed fact of the knowledge of God, so she says, No, it is not death for us, but life—life on the ground of acceptance of sacrifice. What a wonderful gospel she preaches ! It is so full that we cannot refrain from quoting it : "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our

THE MAN OF GOD.

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hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these." *Acceptance with God on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ.* What a glorious gospel!

In conclusion, we should like especially to notice verse 18: "Why asked thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" There is no doubt the right translation is "wonderful," rather than "secret," it being the word used in Isaiah 9. 6: "his name shall be called Wonderful," and also in another form in verse 19 of our chapter. It is quite obvious that it speaks of none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. How wonderful indeed is His name! As we contemplate it in adoring worship glory upon glory opens out to our wondering vision.

How wonderful in all He was and in all He did. Think of the first verse of the Gospel of John—we can only write "wonderful" across it. If we think of His birth, His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and His coming again, what other word than "wonderful" can we use? Or if we think of the things He has done *for* us, or of all the blessings He unfolds *to* us, and of all He accomplishes *in* us, how wonderful!

Then think of the love of Christ for His church in giving Himself for it, and His present service for it in sanctifying and cleansing it with the washing of water by the Word, and in nourishing and cherishing it in view of the moment when He will "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish."

The name of such an One must indeed be "wonderful."

J. R. T.

B. 3. 101

THE SECRET NAME.

O WONDERFUL ! thrice wonderful
Must be the secret name
Of Him who mounts aloft to God
In the devouring flame.

And who shall see the mighty God,
Yet live before His face ?
In the burnt offering shall we live,
In its all-fragrant grace.

Known in the fierce ascending fire,
Excelling praise or fame ;
O wonderful ! most wonderful
Must be Thy blessed name !

E. L. B. (EXTRACTED).

THE BIBLE.

(1 AND 2 KINGS.)

WE must content ourselves with a general survey of the two Books of Kings ; the object of these papers will more truly be accomplished in doing so. Four main points are presented to us in these books : (1) the establishment of glory in the reign of Solomon ; (2) the failure of the kingly line, which resulted in the captivity of Israel and Judah ; (3) the testimony of the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and others ; and (4) certain days of revival. Along with these four main ideas there is another, namely, the faithfulness of God to maintain "a light always for David in Jerusalem" ; therefore we find for David's sake God would not take all the tribes from the son of Solomon. (See 1 Kings 11. 32, 36.) We shall consider the first two features in this paper.

The day of glory. The reign of Solomon to a very

great extent typifies the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus when all will own Him Lord, and "neither adversary or evil" be occurrent. (1 Kings 5. 4.) Psalm 72 speaks of that time, as also many other passages in the prophets, notably Isaiah 32. What a day it will be indeed ! Notice chapter 10. 24 : "And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom." It is refreshing to our hearts to look forward to a time when all the earth will turn to the Lord Jesus for wisdom, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

There is an interesting distinction between Kings and Chronicles which we must notice. In Kings, Solomon sits on the throne of David his father ; in Chronicles it says that "he sat on the throne of the Lord." (1 Chron. 29. 23.) So that in one sense the reign of Solomon as given in Kings brings Christ's *present* glory before us, as on His Father's throne, and the temple in Kings suggests the present heavenly side of things. Notice the materials, cedar wood, gold, costly stones, and brass. How very different from the tabernacle. It is beauty, stability, and display of what is of God ; but in the tabernacle things were treasured in what was outwardly insignificant. Things to-day are very small outwardly, "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called : but God hath chosen the foolish things . . . the weak things . . . the base things of the world, and things which are despised." But the things that are treasured by our hearts in faith are very great indeed. In the temple all is in keeping with the day of glory. It will be manifestly so at the coming of Christ : "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in

glory." (Col. 3. 4.) It is possible to enjoy that day now by faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit. The rule of Christ will soon be public, now it may be known in our hearts.

The failure of the kingly line. Chapter 11 begins with "but." There is always a "but" in man's history. The beginning of Solomon's failure may be seen in chapter 10. Deuteronomy 17. 16, 17 forbade the very things Solomon was doing. And, too, a copy of God's law was to be before the king. If only he had heeded this, he would have been spared his failure. Only thus can we be kept; for obedience must ever mark the creature. From this point the failure increases. Jeroboam the son of Nebat is the pattern of the line having the features of evil; David of that which is pleasing to God.

The line of failure in *Israel* culminates in the reign of Ahab. (See chap. 16. 33.) Thereupon Elijah the prophet is called. The king before Ahab, who was Omri, was bad indeed; but Ahab exceeds in wickedness, and it is noticeable that in his reign the city of Jericho was rebuilt. (Compare Joshua 6. 26.) All this shews the serious departure of Israel at that time.

The open failure of Judah comes later. God's mercy held things back in the tribe of Judah; but in the reign of Ahaz things reach a condition of great evil. In Ahaz himself there was great pretence of piety. (See Isa. 7. 12.) Many prophets were raised up about this time. (See Isa. 7. 1; Hosea 1. 1; Micah 1. 1.) The ten tribes went into captivity for their secret evils and idolatry, as we may read in 2 Kings 17. The Lord removed Israel out of His sight. (Ver. 23.) The captivity of Judah was not complete until many years afterwards. The last king was Zedekiah. At

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the end of his reign Jerusalem was taken and the temple destroyed. (2 Kings 25.) The prophecy of Ezekiel shews us the great evils that were marking God's people at that time. (Ezek. 8. 6-18.)

M. W. B.

“THE FATHER.”

(HEADS OF AN ADDRESS BY S. J. B. CARTER.)

IN a creatorial sense all men are “the offspring of God.” In a kingdom sense He was “a Father to Israel,” and so He is to us. “Sons and daughters” we are in the Father's kingdom. But when we touch new creation, *community of blessing* in this respect between the earthly and the heavenly saints ceases, and the church's *speciality of privilege* is entered into. The full dignity and place of sonship before God and the Father belong only to those who compose the assembly. (Eph. 1.)

“THE FATHER OF SPIRITS.” (HEB. 12. 9.)

“The fathers of our *flesh*” chasten in view of present advantages. But “the Father of *spirits*” disciplines us in view of qualifying us to rule and administer in the coming age. The spirit is *eternal*. The Father's discipline now is to deepen His work in our souls that “we might be partakers of his *holiness*,” and that it might “yield the peaceable fruit of *righteousness*”; but all is in view of our birthright blessing in the world to come. (Heb. 12. 14-24.)

“THE FATHER OF LIGHTS.” (JAMES 1. 17.)

How often the shadows enshroud us! “But in him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

The shadows are cast not because He turns, but because clouds have come between our souls and Him. "The Father of lights"—the mighty Luminary of life and love—ever shines. Let us ever keep ourselves in the sunshine, and in self-judgment dispel every cloud that comes between.

"THE FATHER OF MERCIES." (2 COR. 1. 3.)

Or, better still, "of compassions." Compassions reveal His *feelings*; mercies, His *dealings*. (Rom. 9. 15, New Trans.) How slow we are in tracing our mercies up to their source! We sometimes get occupied with the channels of supply, and then, may be, like Elijah's brook, they dry up. We often find an Elim in the desert, and "encamp by the waters." But let us keep in view the "wells" whence our mercies come.

"THE FATHER OF GLORY." (EPH. 1. 17.)

Glory invariably carries with it the thought of *display*. Search and see whether it is not so. In the first part of Ephesians 1, "the Father of glory" fully displays all His counsels "for the glory of his grace," and "to the praise of his glory." Then the apostle prays that "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of *him*" may be given to the saints. "*The knowledge of him*"—"the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," is beyond any other knowledge—it is sublime and supreme.

"THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."
(EPH. 3. 14.)

Not *our* Father—though He is that—else we might measure the extent of the relationship by what He

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is *to us* rather than to *Him*. He is the Father of that wondrous Being who is both Lord and Head of the universe of God. "Every family in heaven and earth" will find its spring and strength in "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." What a thought to ponder, to assimilate, to enjoy, to express!

THE CROSS.

THE way in which the Lord Jesus left the world is called in Philippians 2. 8 "the death of the cross," and it is so wonderful in its results for God, and so far-reaching in its import for believers, that one is amazed in looking into scripture to find what a place it has both in the gospels, the Acts, and epistles, specially in Pauline writings. It is therefore proposed in a few short papers to consider in as concise a way as possible some of its features, with the desire that the Lord may bless the meditations.

THE CROSS ITSELF.

The word *cross* is understood to be a kind of gibbet, whether made in the form of a T or X, for it took both these forms under the Romans and was a very cruel death, and one of gross ignominy, shame and suffering. It was used for the VILEST OF CRIMINALS, and it became so common amongst the then known world, governed by the Roman power, that a word became quite a daily phrase called "*cruicane*," which described all kinds of pains, afflictions, and adverse circumstances which people suffered. As it was a practice for the victims of this shameful death to bear their cross to the place of their doom, suffering in one's circumstances was called, HAVING A CROSS

TO BEAR. The Lord Jesus had to carry His cross to the place of His execution, as recorded in John 19. 17, but it was too much for the suffering One, so Simon, a Cyrenian, coming up out of the country, was compelled to bear it after Him. In the closing scenes of the gospels, the Spirit of God makes no comment on the spiritual import of the cross, and it is not until we come to the Pauline epistles that we find such an aspect.

THE CROSS IN THE GOSPELS.

The bearing of the cross on discipleship in the body of the gospels is significant, and in a way suggests the great goal to which that truth would bring us as taught by the Spirit of God. The sufferings entailed in discipleship are not minimised or passed over, but what could enable us to take it up save learning its full import and bearing on One who loved us and gave Himself for us, and in doing so DIED THE DEATH OF THE CROSS? We do not propose at the moment to dwell on the cross in relation to discipleship, but to refer to the Acts, and then pass on to Paul's writings.

THE CROSS IN THE ACTS.

In the Acts it is referred to most powerfully by the apostle to bring home to the consciences of His murderers the culmination of their guilt as a nation in crucifying JESUS of Nazareth, "a man approved of God." (See Acts 2. 22, 23, 36.) It was the GREAT LEVER to bring home to them the fact and extent of their rejection of Messiah, in that the ONE raised up of God from amongst them (Acts 13. 23) to be their DELIVERER they had crucified and slain.

F. G. W.

ADMINISTRATION.

THIS is an important part of the truth, and like all other truths has to be learned by each believer experimentally. It is a help if we think first of all of Jesus as Lord and the kingdom set up here now in moral power. This gives us a wide idea of "the administration," and we begin to understand the reality of the power that has been given into the Lord's hands at the right hand of God. The kingdom set up here, and where the Holy Spirit is, is the divine counterpart of the Lord on high in the place of power and administrative authority. We shall see by this that we are divinely connected with the most powerful administration in the universe, and that unlimited resources are at our disposal. There is power to deal with every form of evil, so that the rule becomes effective and does not fail in accomplishing its object. The administration of good cannot be defeated by the tide of evil that it meets with; the good has the upper hand, and the evil is subdued by the positive introduction of the good. The moral idea of the city is thus apprehended by us as the organised centre, so to speak, from whence flow the tides of good in every direction.

Administration brings about the readjustment of all things for God; it is connected with the outward side of the truth, that which is public. The gospel and the new covenant are both connected with the administrative side of the truth; even the church in the Gospel of Matthew is viewed in the same light. She is connected with the "binding" and the "loosing" of things on earth. (Matt. 16. 19.)

The thought of administration contains many different elements. For example, there is the deliberative feature, also the educative and executive parts ; then disciplinary measures cannot be excluded from the great or inclusive idea. The illustration of the various sections or departments of the administration of any country, yet all under one head, helps to simplify the matter. Paul could refer to himself as a competent minister of the new covenant. This shews how well he had grasped the meaning of the administration actively and not merely as an abstract idea. One feels how easily we may be occupied with the mere abstraction of these things and miss the living flow of heavenly wealth all concentrated in the Lord.

It has been pointed out that there are four ministries mentioned in relation to Paul's service ; they are, the ministry of the gospel, the ministry of the new covenant, the ministry of reconciliation, and the ministry of the mystery. These, so to speak, are some of the departments of the great administration. The first, the gospel, stands in relation to all men. The other three are undoubtedly connected with the saints of God. Each ministry has its own peculiar place in the whole scheme.

The frequent use of a word such as administration is apt to leave us merely occupied with the abstract idea only. It is comparatively simple to become acquainted with the terms that are used in connection with this great truth, but if we are detained at the word itself only, without realising the activity of the administration as being worked out in ourselves, we shall lose all the gain of the moral side of the truth, and have a mere mental equipment and no power.

Rather than define the thing one would seek to know the moral power of the administration in a practical, everyday way. We easily shew if we are under the Lord or not. It is evident in many ways whether things are living with us or merely formal and mental. To enter into the more intimate thought of the family, it is quite certain that the administrative side of the truth has to be learned first.

As an illustration, Mary, in John 12, in the family place that she had reached practically and morally, would never have been able to take up that distinguished position unless she had first of all taken the place in the administrative side of things as seen with her in Luke 10. In this way she passes from the administrative side to the family side, and all on account of the way she had been in touch with the Lord. It might be just to remark that the supper is the point perhaps where we pass from the one side to the other. The subject is a very great one and must be understood by each soul as he or she is in living and secret touch with the Lord.

Words are very feeble, and fail greatly in conveying the truth as to divine things, if the things themselves are understood subjectively. Or, in other words, if we are in the joy of these things and are holding them in relation to the Lord Himself personally, we shall then have no difficulty whatever in understanding the words employed, or the external forms or expressions used in the presentation of the living things themselves. We learn nouns much easier than we do verbs; let us be more concerned about the verbs, the living, active, moving things. We cannot learn for one another; what others have learned we also have to learn, and the Lord is indeed our resource,

as Joseph was in his day, both on the kingdom side and the family side. Let us know what it is to keep near to the Lord and get everything that way. It is the surest way in the end; what we get from Him will be our own for ever.

J. JAY.

“MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS.”

(GEN. 6. 5; PSA. 94. 11; ISA. 65. 2; JER. 6. 19, 30; 29. 11; ISA. 55. 6-12.)

THERE is a striking contrast between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of men, and I would like to trace, in this short paper, the character, course, and ultimate issue of each, as set forth in the holy scriptures. It is well to point out at the commencement that it is God Himself that gives the summing up of the thoughts of men, it is He that searches the hearts, and renders the verdict, and you may be sure that He makes a correct reading, for there are no errors in divine judgment.

Let us look at the first pronouncement by God of the thoughts of men. He looks down into their hearts and takes account of their thoughts, that they are *evil every day*. In spite of His goodness, and the promise of redemption made to Adam and Eve, and handed down to their generation, and in the face of the testimony of such men as Abel, Enoch and Noah, their hearts are imagining evil every day. Each day sees some fresh wickedness added to that awful pile of sin (“very great,” God says of it) until God is determined to sweep the earth clean of it. This He does in the flood, and we see a fresh start made in Noah and his house. Now we find that

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history repeats itself, and there soon develops a state of things as bad as ever, and we find the imaginations of the hearts of men working once more against the blessed God. Men get together, and seek to raise a structure that will shut out all thought of God. They say, “Let us make us a name.” There is nothing wrong in that, you say. God saw something wrong in it and blew upon it very quickly, as He will again when the present period of man’s activity reaches its climax. God read their hearts, and saw once again their machinations against Himself, and that despite the fact that their parents had been preserved from the flood, and the promise that God had made of His preserving care over them, and His faithfulness in fulfilling that promise.

In Isaiah 65 we hear again the blessed God speaking, and how touching is the language. He says, “I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts.” That is a bad road to be travelling, a very dangerous path to tread, for it leads down to destruction. It is indeed a way that is not good. Where does it lead? Listen again to the words of God. In Jeremiah 6. 19 we hear the voice of God pronouncing a solemn sentence upon those people who have, in spite of all His entreaties, persisted in “that way not good, walking after their own thoughts.” Listen to the solemn words: “Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, *even the fruit of their thoughts*, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.” And again in verse 30 we read: “Reprobate silver shall they call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.” They had persistently rejected

Him, and now He has to reject them. They had gone a way not good, they had produced fruit that was evil—reprobate silver, nothing but dross, to be thrown away. That is the end of that path along which man's own thoughts will lead him. Sinner, be warned in time. Do not continue on that course, lest you at last stand before Him who shall say to all such, You have rejected Me, I must reject you.

Now, having brought before you, in brief, the character, course and ultimate end of the thoughts of men, let us turn to the other and brighter side of our subject. We have heard what God has to say about man after the flesh, not one good thing, now let us incline our ear to hear what He has to say about what is in His own blessed heart *for* men. Listen to this, "I know the thoughts that I think *towards* you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil." What glad tidings that is! What a blessed answer to all the evil that has been operative in the hearts of men. What a wondrous disclosure God makes of the thoughts of *His* heart. One delights in speaking of it. God has got definite and distinct thoughts of blessing for men. How do we reach it? There is one condition suggested here that is very important, and that is, God wants your whole heart. He says, "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with *all your heart*."

Now let us turn again to the Book of Isaiah. We get a wonderful appeal made by the blessed God in chapter 55. An invitation is here sent out worthy of the earnest consideration of every sinner. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his *thoughts*: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he

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will abundantly pardon.” And He is acting in perfect righteousness, He is not passing by their sins, He is not just patching up the sinner and giving him a fresh chance. No! He is moving now in relation to another Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is seeking to bring men into touch with that wondrous blessing which has come out from His own heart.

Let us consider for a moment the *way* it has come out. Look at chapter 53 of this book. We hear there a people speaking from the heart, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” They had been walking the way that was not good, after their own thoughts. We see also that perfect, blessed Man (Jesus) walking another road—oh! wonderful path, the way He trod, growing up before His God as a tender plant, as a root out of a dry ground, ever devoted to the will of God, in view of the blessing of those poor sheep who had gone astray. He pursues that path right on, through life and death, to its wonderful end. Yes, it is on account of that suffering Man in chapter 53 that you have the singing woman in chapter 54., and the blessed gospel in chapter 55.

C. D-N.

“COME YE NEAR UNTO ME.”

A DEEPER knowledge of Himself I sought,
 A fuller, clearer light,
 To feel His touch, to hear again His voice,
 To lead and guide me thro' this world's dark night,
 Be this, O Lord, my choice

GOODLY WORDS.

To leave my all with Him to choose for me
 The path for me to tread ;
 Tho' rough and thorny, steep the road may be,
 There's rest of heart if only by Him led,
 And peace, O Lord, in Thee.

When footsore, weary, troubled, tempest toss'd,
 I go to Him for calm ;
 I feel His soothing touch, my spirit's hush'd,
 He bids me lean on His Almighty arm—
 Encircled with His love.

And when the days are dark, and lone, and drear,
 What is this, Lord, to teach ?
 Thou seem'st to say, "Come unto Me, draw near,
 And I will thee, and all thy burden, bear ;
 For thou art *Mine*—redeemed."

Thou art my Strength, my Fortress, and my Guide,
 My Refuge in life's storm ;
 Thy piercèd hand has every need supplied,
 I would no longer fear, but calmly hide
 In Thee, belovèd Lord.

B. E. M. H.

BIBLE STUDY AND LENA'S LETTER.

Subject : BAPTISM.

The word to baptise means to plunge, wash, or dip. Baptism takes a very significant place in scripture, and I feel it a very important subject, and I am much exercised to handle it aright in my suggestions for our study. I think we might study it under four distinct headings.

(1) There were the Jewish ceremonial washings ; for examples see Exodus 29. 4 and Numbers 8. 7. Probably referred to in Hebrews 6. 2 and 9. 10, but we are told in the latter verse that they were only until "the time of reformation," which is connected with "Christ being come," and in the former verse the Hebrew believers were exhorted to leave them.

(2) John's baptism in Jordan. The baptism of *repentance*. (See Acts 13. 24 ; 19. 4.) Those who were baptised of him took definite, separate ground, judging themselves and the sinful state of the nation in view of the coming of Messiah. They formed the faithful remnant of those days, hence the Lord, when He came,

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could take His place among them as those who were thus fulfilling all righteousness. (See Matt. 3.)

(3) During the Lord's ministry before the cross His disciples baptised some to Him as Messiah. (See John 4. 1.)

(4) *Christian baptism.* After Christ's death and resurrection, believers were baptised in His name "for the remission of sins," which could now be given because the work of atonement was an accomplished fact. (See Acts 2. 38; also Acts 22. 16.)

We get further thoughts in Romans 6. 3-5 and Colossians 2. 12.

Christians are baptised to Christ's death (that is, they have part in it)—they are buried with Him by baptism, and are alive to God in Him risen.

To put it simply in the lines of one of our hymns, in baptism we acknowledge that—

"Christ's death has severed ties which bound us here,
Himself our Object in a brighter sphere."

And not only *this*, but in baptism we are *identified* with Christ's death, and now all that we are by nature has gone in the death of Christ and has been put out of sight in burial, and we are set up afresh *in newness of life* in what has now definitely become a *contrary scene* to us. Oh, to be true to our baptism!

Baptism is not connected with our *heavenly* privileges but with our status on *earth*. Israel's passage through the Red Sea is a type of baptism, but not the crossing of Jordan. They came up on the shores of the wilderness (not Canaan), but they had spiritual sustenance. (See 1 Cor. 10. 2-4.)

Baptism is individual. The assembly, as such, does not go into death, but it has its origin in Christ's resurrection, associated with Him as Firstborn from the dead. (See Col. 1. 18.)

I think scripture gives us clear evidence that where it is a matter of a man's blessing or privilege God connects his household with him (for example see Gen. 7. 1. and 1 Cor. 7. 14), so it will not surprise us to find that in several instances the household of a believer is baptised. (See Acts 16. 23; 1 Cor 1. 16.)

Exercise.

1. Write a few lines linking either (1) Noah and his family, or (2) Moses as a babe with baptism.
2. Baptism is always "*to*" a person or thing. Learn and then quote from memory four verses that illustrate this.
3. Baptism is used figuratively by the Lord. Refer to the occasion and explain. (Matthew and Mark.)

[*Replies to be sent to "LENA," Grasmere, Burgess Hill,
Sussex.*]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

Since studying our subject of *truth*, another little touch has come before my notice to which I should like to draw your attention. It occurs in John 8. 31, 32.

The Lord in speaking to those who believed on Him and desired to follow Him said, "If ye *continue* in *my word*, then are ye my disciples indeed," and then adds the promise, "and ye shall *know the truth*, and *the truth* shall make you *free*."

Surely this is the real path of liberty, if we simply allow ourselves to be governed by the truth, so that it is made good *in us* by the Spirit of truth. John speaks in his second epistle of loving a christian lady and her children in the truth and "for the truth's sake, *which dwelleth in us*, and shall be with us for ever." (Ver. 2.)

I feel we have much yet to learn experimentally with regard to the truth.

Most papers were very good and concise, and I hope the study was a spiritual help to all of us. I am pleased with the appreciative letters from the students who received books last month, and we hope you will all gain spiritually by reading them.

Yours affectionately in the Lord Jesus,

LENA.

List of Replies for March.

Subject: TRUTH.

Class 1.—Cissy Allison,* Hilda Bush, Mary Brown,* Elsie Buckley,* Dorothy Boggis, Winnie Dunham, Elsie Evered, Grace Eayrs,* Robert Ireland, Eliz. Millar, Dorothy Moorhouse, Isabel Mayo, Ruth Musson, Grace Pye, Grace Railton,* Mary Railton,* Nellie Railton,* Irene Rusling, Ethel Schneider,* Eunice Palmer, George Palmer,* Freda Parker, Evelyn Thorstensen,* Albert Tipler,* Freda Watts, Mildred Watson.*

Class 2.—Gwendoline Church, Olive Norris, Edna Storey, Kathleen Suckling, Eleanor Tedbury, C. Warner.

Late for November, 1923.—*Class 1.*—Priscilla* and Isabella* Walker, Herbert and Donald Walker (Australia).

Late for December, 1923.—*Class 1.*—Grace McPhee, Priscilla and Isabella Walker. *Class 2.*—Herbert and Donald Walker (Australia).

Late for January, 1924.—*Class 1.*—Florence Merritt,* Grace McPhee, Olive Norris. *Class 2.*—Robert Philips, Muriel Piesse.

THE MAN OF GOD.

(1 SAM 2. 27-36.)

THE verses given above are sorrowful to contemplate, speaking as they do of the breakdown, nay, of the degradation of the priesthood. There is also the bright side shewing that, as ever, God is not without resources.

This is the way the man of God is introduced here. He is one who comes out as the representative of God when His interests are departed from. How striking are the resources of God in Christ of which he speaks, and that at the moment of shameful failure. "A faithful priest," "a sure house," "mine anointed"—no failure or breakdown in connection with the purpose of God.

God never intervenes in judgment without a previous warning.

In verse 10 of our chapter the anointed was brought in for the first time ; clearly the king. In the announcement of judgment on the house of Eli, God also made known the change about to come in by the setting up of a king, an anointed one.

Hitherto to the people of God *the* anointed one had been the high priest, but now God speaks of One before whom the high priest is to walk, and from this point the anointed one comes more and more into evidence. It is instructive to notice that the anointed one—the Lord's anointed—is spoken of more frequently in the two books of Samuel than elsewhere.

Then, too, we notice that upon the failure of the priesthood God raises up a prophetic testimony, a

testimony which would bring before the people the communications of His mind. Samuel in this way marks a new beginning in relation to the testimony of God. Peter evidently recognises this in Acts 3. 24 when he says that all the prophets *from* Samuel bore witness of Christ.

How slow God is to move in the way of judgment. Eli did not belong to that branch of the priesthood with which, in Numbers 25. 11-13, He had made a covenant of an everlasting priesthood. Three hundred years had passed, and now the house of Phinehas is to come into the place God had marked out for it. Even then before the actual setting aside of the house of Eli there was a brief respite, but its fulfilment is seen in 1 Kings 2. 27, and in verse 35 Zadok of the house of Phinehas is put in his place. And if we turn to Ezekiel 44. 15, the sons of Zadok are brought before us by Jehovah as privileged to "come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood . . . they shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge . . . and they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane . . . they shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering": seven precious privileges confirmed to those who had stood for the Lord when the children of Israel went astray from Him. These may be our privileges, too, in a fuller and more blessed sense than they could be known to the sons of Zadok.

J. R. T.

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THE BIBLE.

(1 AND 2 KINGS—*continued.*)

IN our previous paper we considered two features which marked the Book of Kings, namely, the day of glory, and the failure of the kingly line; in this we shall consider the prophetic testimony and the day of revival.

The testimony of the prophets. The prophets Elijah and Elisha were sent to the ten tribes of Israel because they had openly departed from God; Jeroboam had set up the golden calves (1 Kings 12. 26 to end), and Ahab's wickedness was great, as we have seen. Elijah's testimony was based on what the people *ought* to have been; Elisha's testimony was on the ground of *what God was*, in spite of what His people were. Elijah's testimony was a call to repentance; Elisha's a ministry of grace. How dignified the prophet Elijah appears in chapter 18, standing alone for God in the midst of general apostasy. The position of Obadiah (chap. 18. 1-16) seems weak and morally poor compared with Elijah's bold stand. What encouragement to us all Elijah is here. But Elijah himself may warn us. In chapter 18 he is with God and fearless; in chapter 19 he has man before him and becomes depressed; but God's sovereign mercy secures seven thousand when outwardly all seems to have gone.

The ministry of Elisha brings before our hearts the Lord Jesus and our present day of grace. John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah. I do not go into the details of this interesting prophet (Elisha) save to draw attention to the link of chariots of fire

in connection with him. (See 2 Kings 2. 11 ; 6. 17 ; 13. 14.) The latter scripture is] full of instruction. The dying prophet is full of the vigour of faith and is indignant at the lack of it in the king. God would always have us count largely upon Him ; His resources are illimitable. Is there a solemn allusion to the day of judgment in the reign of Jehu ? There is warning in Elijah ; there is grace in Elisha ; there is judgment in Jehu's reign.

Days of revival. There were remarkable kings in Judah's line, especially Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah. The reign of the first-named, Asa, is given us in greater detail in Chronicles. He was bright at the beginning, but failure marked him at the end. The period of many years' peace proved too great a test for him. Jehoshaphat's history may shew us the great danger of unholy friendship. He was a good king and a pious man personally, but his links with those who were ungodly resulted at one time in his almost losing his life (see 1 Kings 22. 32 and 2 Kings 11. 1), and at another in the death of nearly all the royal seed of Judah. God's mercy saved the situation and little Joash is preserved alive.

The three periods of revival we may link with the reigns of Jehoash (Joash), Hezekiah, and Josiah. The first revival was chiefly owing to the old priest Jehoiada and is linked principally with repairing the house of God. The second revival, in the days of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18), was more general. (See vers. 3-5.) The king of Syria thought he would conquer Jerusalem as he had taken Samaria, but it is refreshing to see the faith of Hezekiah, trusting in the living God. (Chap. 19. 4.) How simple it is for God to come in if only we trust Him. Hezekiah is a type

of the Lord Jesus as one who is raised from death. Personally his failure eventually resulted in Judah being carried into Babylon. (2 Kings 20. 17.)

Two wicked kings followed Hezekiah, Manasseh and Amon. Manasseh turned to God in his old age, and possibly Josiah was the fruit of his grandfather's repentance. Josiah was only eight years old when he began to reign, and from his early days he walked in all the ways of David his father. How very encouraging this is to all who are young. There was a great revival in that day (see chap. 23), but in spite of the momentary recovery the general evil necessitated that God should remove Judah out of His sight, as he removed Israel. (Ver. 27.) How intensely sad all this history of the failure of man is. The revivals speak of God's mercy ; the ruin of our failure.

It is encouraging to see that the book ends with an interposition of God's mercy and kindness, so that the king who was in captivity in Babylon was lifted up out of prison and was spoken to kindly, his prison garments were changed and he ate bread before the king of Babylon continually. (2 Kings 25. 27 to end.)

M. W. B.

NIGHT SEASONS.

(Acts 16. 9, 10 ; 18. 9, 10 ; 23. 11 ; 27. 23-25.)

HOW different the night is from the day ; all the activity of the day gradually decreases as the night comes on, and as darkness falls the time for rest and quiet comes ; and would not the Lord take the opportunity of the quiet and rest of the night, when all around is hushed, to speak to us often, to cause His voice to be heard ?

We find it so with Jacob on that memorable night when he fled from Esau ; God caused His voice to be heard, and what comfort and support it was to him.

So also in Psalm 16. 7 : "My reins also instruct me in the night seasons " ; and Psalm 17. 3 : "Thou hast proved mine heart ; thou hast visited me in the night."

Surely, too, the seasons we all pass through of sorrow, or pressure, or of special testing in some way, are again to us night seasons, when we in our minds are less affected by the things of this life, and we look at them in their true perspective according to God ; and we listen to hear the Lord's voice. And the Lord would speak, and would instruct us, and who can overestimate the importance of really, each one of us, hearing what the Lord has to say. Habakkuk says : "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me. . . . And the Lord answered me." (Chap. 2. 1, 2.) So the Lord delights to speak, and give to each a word from Himself.

In the four scriptures in Acts referred to at the head of this paper, we find four night seasons with the Apostle Paul, in each of which he gets a definite word from the Lord.

In the first scripture Paul gets *direction*. We see Paul and those with him at Troas. They had been "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia " ; "they assayed to go into Bithynia : but the Spirit suffered them not" (vers. 6, 7) ; now what were they to do ? The Lord comes in ; a vision appeared to Paul in the night, a man of Macedonia prayed him, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us."

“Immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, *assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us* for to preach the gospel unto them.” What encouragement to have received a distinct word of direction from the Lord. Sometimes in seasons of exercise we feel, too, that we need definite direction from the Lord, and He would speak to us to *direct* us as He did the apostle. May we not be asleep and miss His voice, but be able to start out conscious of having got direction from the Lord. In his case it is in regard to service, but surely we may give it a wider application; and the Lord will *direct* us as we listen for His voice in the night.

In the second scripture it is not direction Paul gets but *support*. He is at Corinth, and there is much opposition; but God is working, and again there is a word from the Lord in the night. “Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: *for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee*: for I have much people in this city.” What support this was, learned in the night, “Fear not . . . I am with thee.” (New Trans.) Is there one who feels they need support? The Lord knows just how to give that word as He did to Paul, and we must learn it in secret with Him, and if the Lord is with us we need not fear man. “I am with thee . . . no man shall set on thee to hurt thee.”

The next experience is at Jerusalem. Paul had had a most testing time, he had only been saved from being torn to pieces by the mob through the intervention of the Roman soldiers; and all that as the result of his devotion to the Jews and his desire to bring them the glad tidings. We might say Paul

had made a mistake in going to Jerusalem. We may look around and say one or another have made mistakes, but what does the Lord say? Think of Paul that night in the fortress with all that he had gone through, doubtless very discouraged; perhaps even blaming himself for having come to Jerusalem—we do not know. But the Lord knows all about his desires, He looks at the heart, and *He comes Himself* with a word of encouragement; how sweet it must have been to this weary servant in the night season.

At Troas it was a vision, at Corinth the Lord said by vision, but at Jerusalem there is no vision, it is *the Lord Himself*, "The Lord stood by him." What a cheer! what an encouragement! And then His word, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome"; that is how the Lord speaks to him, "Thou hast testified of me." All the tumult of the day is over, sad at heart that the testimony is refused, but the Lord values it, and at night in the fortress the Lord Himself is with His servant, and shews His value of the service, "Thou hast testified of me." And there is further service in store "also at Rome." May we each know what it is in our moments of peculiar need to know the Lord's presence as the apostle did, and to know how He values things, that we may be encouraged in the Lord.

And this brings us to the last scripture, and there in the night Paul learns that all is *secured*, all is *assured*. There was the storm and the shipwreck, and as we look around, outwardly we feel things have gone to pieces; the powers of evil seem to mount higher and higher, and it might seem that all would be lost. But we want to learn what Paul learnt again in the night,

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and that is, *that nothing will be lost*. "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul . . . and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

Then all will not be lost? No, *God secures all*. The ship may go to pieces, but all come safely to land; what assurance for our souls! May our confidence be in God, and like Paul may we be able to say, "*Whose I am, and whom I serve*." May we hear His word of assurance that all will be secured (for all that is of Himself God secures), and say: "I believe God." Thus as directed, supported and encouraged by the Lord, our confidence in Him, knowing all is secured by God Himself, we should be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

F. S.

THE PEARL.

EVERY pearl is formed by a bit of sand or grit that gets into the oyster shell: the oyster cannot get rid of it, so covers it over with nacre, layer after layer, till the pearl is formed. Therefore the pearl is the answer of the injured life to the thing that injured.

We by our sin have wounded Him, and He through His wonderful love has transformed the injury and made it the occasion of forming the pearl which is His bride.—(*Extracted*.)

THE CROSS IN ROMANS.

IN the Epistle of Paul to the Romans the word "cross" is not, I believe, actually found, although the word crucified occurs in Romans 6. 6; nevertheless its truth underlies and is hidden away—save to the spiritual eye—in some of its most precious statements. For our present purpose it will suffice to suggest to our readers that in chapter 4. 25, where those lovely soul-emancipating words are found, "Who was **DELIVERED** for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," the **TRUTH OF THE CROSS** is taught with divine meaning. Pilate, we are told, **DELIVERED JESUS** to the Jews to be crucified (see John 19. 16), and in Acts 2. 23 we read, "Him, being **DELIVERED** by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Let us put these together and consider them.

1. **COUNSEL DELIVERED HIM.**
2. **PILATE DELIVERED HIM.**
3. **GOD DELIVERED HIM.**

God's estimate of our offences could only be shewn up in the eyes of a universe of created intelligences, and also to our view, by His dying the **DEATH OF THE CROSS**, hence by counsel and by God Himself He was delivered for our offences. What marvellous grace that the One whom we had offended provides Himself a Ransom for us from those offences by His own blessed Son being delivered to such a death. But He was raised again for our justification, and at the very moment when man was filling up his cup of guilt to the full by taking Him by wicked hands and crucifying Him and slaying Him, He became the **SIN-**

THE CROSS IN ROMANS.

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BEARER. Such is the grace of God to man.¶ Reader, do you know that such is your guilt on the one hand, and such the grace of God on the other, that your guilt may be cancelled this very moment and never be brought up against you, if you will but come to Him as a poor sinner needing grace. In Christ crucified and risen is your deliverance and justification. God grant that it may be so, NOW, at this moment.

Not only so, but sin as a root principle in man has been judged at the cross, hence the Spirit of God says in Romans 8. 3, 4: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin [namely, as a sacrifice for sin], has condemned sin in the flesh." (New Trans.) It is important to see that here also underlying this precious statement is the death of the cross. And what a statement as to man; what moral corruption that needed such a death to dispose of it for God! It reminds us of Isaiah 1. 5, 6: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint . . . no soundness in it," etc. What is to be done? Man cannot be mended, therefore he must be ended morally and sacrificially in the death of Christ on the cross. In order that the soul of man may be delivered from such condemnation and judgment, God has done this Himself by delivering Jesus to the death of the cross; a death of guilt on man's part, but a supreme act of love on God's part.

Physical life was the portion of an Israelite who accepted God's testimony in regard of the serpent of brass on the pole (see Num. 21. 9), representative of the fiery serpents which had bitten them; and spiritual life is ours when we accept God's testimony as to this wondrous fact concerning the cross of our Lord

Jesus Christ. (Rom. 6. 6, 7.) Justification from our offences lies in ANOTHER outside of ourselves altogether, and also deliverance from the condemnation of sin in the flesh. For although I know forgiveness, I am still conscious that I have sin in me, and it is this that troubles and harasses me, because although forgiveness is known and enjoyed as to the past, what troubles me now is the root principle of sin still in me in spite of the grace of forgiveness known. What is the remedy? Here the Spirit of God would divinely teach us that the same cross is the way out of this condemnation I find in myself. God's way out must be my way out. Hence God has condemned, or, as you might say, *executed at the cross* sin in the flesh for us by the death of Jesus on the cross.

He did not die for my sins only, although that be true, but He died for *my* SIN. The root of sin that is in our nature, that harasses the heart of the believer every day, is put away for God and for faith by the death of Jesus on the cross, and hence as He took our place we are dead to it. He has condemned sin in the flesh in Christ's sacrifice and put it away for ever, and, blessed be His name, the whole question is settled, and that which was such a weight on my spirit and a thorn in my conscience is taken away by the very way in which the condemnation was so fully completed in the crucifixion of Christ. It has been done perfectly by God Himself outside of me altogether, and I rejoice in His perfect work and in it learn my deliverance. He takes away our sins and the condemnation of sin in our nature by His judgment being executed upon the sinless flesh of His own Son. There is the greatest grace to meet my sins, and that which could have no grace shewn to it He has condemned

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in sending His own Son, and that which troubles me most of all, indwelling sin, has been provided for and condemned in sending His own Son. His death on the cross now breaks all my links in my new affections with that which I now hate. I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and my deliverance is not in myself but in Christ Jesus. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . . for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Reader, can you with one look of faith to the cross of Jesus see and accept God's judgment of the whole SIN QUESTION, and with that same faith see your deliverance in ANOTHER MAN? God grant it, for His name's sake, and say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

F. G. W.

"MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS."

(GEN. 6. 5; PSA. 94. 11; ISA. 65. 2; JER. 6. 19, 30; 29. 11; ISA. 55. 6-12.)

WE were speaking last month of the blessing that God has in His heart towards man. It is *abundant* pardon because God's heart is so perfectly satisfied with Christ, and every claim is so fully met in Jesus. It is because *Jesus died* that God can now come out as a pardoning God; it is because *Jesus lives* that that wondrous stream of life and blessing is now flowing down from the heart of God. You will lose sight of yourself as your eye rests on Him who is the joy of God's heart. How gladly will you forsake your own unprofitable thoughts, as you take in the thoughts of God as made known in the Lord Jesus Christ. He who was a root out of

a dry ground will make a whole universe verdant with His own spirit, peopling it with men like unto Himself, after His order. He who was cut off here, will have a mighty generation for His eternal praise. God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts." There is the answer to all the erroneous doctrines of men abroad to-day. That word about the heavens being higher than the earth is very important, as there is a great deal of teaching abroad that would suggest the blessing starting on earth, in the heart of man, independent of God, apart from redemption or of the work of Christ; but it begins in heaven, it comes down to earth from the heart of God, and it all stands fully declared in Christ at God's right hand, borne witness to on earth by the Holy Spirit *sent down from heaven*. Yes; the heavens are higher than the earth, and from heaven descends the rain in showers of blessing, producing for God precious fruit. It is that which comes down from heaven that produces fruit, that which has its origin in the heart of God, manifested in its fulness in Christ and now continued in the power of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who love Christ.

God is having nothing more to do with man after the flesh, that man has proved to be utterly hopeless, and as you come to that in your own soul, you will be able to appreciate the thoughts of God in regard of Christ. Men are trying to get the blessing without Christ, but that cannot be. This wondrous blessing of life has come down *from heaven in Christ*, and now continued in the power of the Holy Spirit *from Christ in heaven*. It is a beautiful simile, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven . . . so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth."

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It is the word of the blessed God, the word of life and blessing, and when it has produced its full results it will culminate in a universe of bliss. It is going along now on its grand course, it is accomplishing that whereunto it has been sent. The church is the present result of it ; she will soon be caught up to glory, and then Israel and, through them, the nations of the earth will come into the good of it, and bring forth fruit for God.

It is a very blessed study to trace the origin, course, and ultimate issue of the thoughts of God. What a mercy if we have in any measure been delivered from the lie of Satan, and have learned to appreciate some of God's precious thoughts as seen in Christ. What a happy change takes place in the heart as those thoughts are embraced. You are moving in another path now, a way that is good, “Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace.” Peace ! what a grand word that is, and it is here fraught with the deepest meaning. It is a divinely-established peace, the fruit of righteousness. The joy and peace spoken of here are not obtainable in man's world, it is the fruit of that blessed rain from heaven, that ministry from a glorified Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. “The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” You are moving along now in a scene of joy and gladness, and everything utters the praise of God ; the light of another world is shining in your soul. And why ? Because in your heart the thoughts of God made known in our Lord Jesus Christ have found a place. You are living now under the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit, and those refreshing rains of ministry from heaven are

descending upon you, and instead of your own thoughts, you have divine thoughts to engage your heart.

We may well pause here and ask ourselves the question, Is this true of me? Well, dear reader, it is true *for* you, for it is God's own proposal for those who will search after Him with all their hearts. I know that these scriptures will actually be true of Israel by-and-by, but these things are true now morally of souls that come under the sway of Christ, and who have the light of heaven in their hearts. Jesus is there, and the Holy Ghost is here, and so the blessing is flowing now down into the hearts of those that love Christ.

Then we read, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree." Beautiful words! it is grand to think of their actual fulfilment by-and-by, but it is a blessed thing to know their present meaning and reality. "INSTEAD OF" is not "as well as"! It is a question of *displacement*. God is working until all trace of the curse is for ever removed. That displacement is taking place in the hearts of the saints of God to-day. What is the thorn and the brier? The fruit of the curse, they speak of what is painful and troublesome and cruel. It was a crown of thorns they placed upon the head of Jesus, it is the expression of hatred and hostility against what is good. And what of the fir and the myrtle? There is a beautiful suggestion here. The fir here spoken of is such as was used for the making of musical instruments, and the boughs of the myrtle were used to decorate the booths at the feast of tabernacles. So we have praise to God and rest and blessing in the hearts of men. The feast of tabernacles was the

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last, and, in a sense, the best feast of all. It was after the vintage had been gathered in, and they sat down to enjoy the fruits.

There is a striking reference to the myrtle in Zechariah i. It speaks there of a man standing among the myrtle trees (also called the angel of the Lord), “And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth *sitteth still, and is at rest.*” What a blessed end is reached when the thoughts of God have their fulfilment.

Let me give you an example of the displacement of the thorn and brier by the fir and myrtle. Look at Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter. There you have the thorn and brier, threatening cruel havoc and desolation among the saints of God. Look at the same man a little later in his history. See him there in the prison at Philippi with Silas. He has felt the thorn and brier that day, not now from within, flourishing in his heart, as had been the case in days gone by, he is feeling them now from without. And what of within? What a change has taken place in that once hard heart. He has seen higher than the earth, he has heard the voice of God saying, “My thoughts are not your thoughts.” He has come face to face with Jesus, and the love of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, has filled his soul, and under that heavenly influence the fir and the myrtle have made their appearance in his heart. The music has been produced, and the peace and blessing of heaven enjoyed. They sang praises at midnight, and I am sure that no sweeter music was ever heard than that which rose

from the prison at Philippi that night. We know what the result was, there was power there—the same power that will soon bring in a whole universe of praise. And it spread even on that same night, for in the heart of the jailor the thorn and the brier gave place to the fir and myrtle. In that house the rest of that night we have a picture of the millenium, people *rejoicing together* under the sway of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is going to be a permanent order of things, God is going to have a continuance of this ; He says, “It . . . shall not be cut off.”

We have seen how man’s thoughts lead him eventually to eternal ruin, and how, on the line of God’s thoughts, men are brought into eternal peace and blessing. How is it with you, reader ? There is one test and one alone to determine on which line your soul is travelling : “What think ye of Christ ? ”

“What think ye of Christ is the test
To try both your state and your scheme ;
You *cannot* think right of the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him.”

There is no blessing for any one on earth or in heaven outside of Christ. All God’s thoughts for men are centred in Him. God is greatly interested in those who love Jesus. The universe is going to be filled with those who love Jesus. We read that “men shall be blessed in him : all nations shall call him blessed.” Do not be occupied with the thoughts of men, they will perish. Lay hold of Christ, and you will then know and enjoy the thoughts of God which are for eternity.

C. D-N.

ENDURANCE.

(HEB. 11. 27.)

LORD ! Lord ! our eyes have never yet beheld Thee !
But, oh ! Thy voice our hearts so very often hear !
Thy voice of love—of love that once impell'd Thee,
To give Thyself in death for those Thou heldst so dear.

To see Thee, Lord, and even to be like Thee,
Is now the blissful hope for which we wait and long ;
When heav'n and earth, in one accord, invite Thee,
And gladden'd hearts break forth in one triumphant song.

But, Lord, oh ! Lord, the waiting tests us greatly,
And much we need to know and feel Thee ever near.
The powers of hell would break us down completely,
So keep us, Lord, and often tell us—"I AM HERE," W. L.

BIBLE STUDY AND LENA'S LETTER.

Subject : CONFESSION.

Confession is referred to in two different connections in scripture :
(1) confession of sins, and (2) confession of the Lord Jesus.

(1) *Confession of sins.* If we refer to Leviticus 5. 5 and Numbers 5. 6, 7, we shall see that the law required it, and that if confession was accompanied by a sacrifice, forgiveness was granted. Now in virtue of Christ's atoning sacrifice *once* offered the Apostle John could say of Christians : "If we *confess* our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1. 9.) In view of the same offering David could say in Psalm 32. 5 : "I acknowledged my sin unto thee . . . I said, I will *confess* my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." As a result of John the Baptist's preaching, the people confessed their sins and were baptised. (See Matt. 3. 5, 6.)

It is also very beautiful to notice how Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah confessed the sins of the people before God as if they were their own. (See Dan. 9. 4-20 ; Ezra 9 and 10 ; Neh. 1. 6, etc. Please refer.) James exhorts us to mutual confession of faults. (See James 5. 16.)

(2) *Confession of the Lord Jesus.* We find one very definite example of this in John 9. 22 and 30-38, with the result of excommunication from the Jewish religious system, but great spiritual gain and the company of Christ in exchange. Romans 10. 10 tells us that "*confession* is made unto salvation."

This is the same as "profession," and the word is identical in the original.

Every tongue will one day have to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2. 11), but we, who desire to own Him now, have the beautiful promise : "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, *him will I confess* also before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 10. 32.)

What higher honour could one have ?

Exercise.

1. Learn and then write from memory part of Ezra's confession. (Ezra 9. 6, 8, 9.)
2. Write a few lines connecting (1) Isaiah 45. 23, (2) Romans 14. 11, and (3) Philippians 2. 10, 11.
3. "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them [his sins] shall have mercy." (Prov. 28. 13.) Shew how this is exemplified in 2 Chronicles 6 and 7. 1.

[Replies to be sent to "LENA," Grasmere, Burgess Hill, Sussex.]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

The essays answering the scriptural question, "What communion hath light with darkness?" have pleased me very much.

Many varied and important scriptures on the subject were brought forward, and I much appreciated the way the practical side of the question was recognised.

I feel the answer to that question affects our daily pathway in almost every detail—perhaps more with some of us than with others, but the principle abides and is most important to recognise if we desire to be fruitbearers for God down here. May He enable us all, with thankful hearts, to own that we have been delivered from the power of darkness and are by His grace children of light and children of the day, and then to walk consistently as such, to His glory.

Yours affectionately, LENA.

List of Replies to April's Essay.

Subject: LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

Class 1.—Cissy Allison, Mary Brown,* Elsie Buckley,* Dorothy Boggis, Winnie Dunham,* Elsie Evered, Grace Eayrs,* Nora Huson,* Robert Ireland, Isabel Mayo, Ruth Musson,* Olive Norris, Grace Railton,* Nellie Railton,* Mary Railton,* Irene Rusling, Ethel Schneider,* Kathleen Suckling, Eunice Palmer, Freda Parker, George Palmer, Elanor Tedbury, Albert Tipler,* Freda Watts,* Mildred Watson, C. Warner.

Class 2.—Edna Storey, Mercy Satchwell.

Late for January.—*Class 1.*—Priscilla,* Herbert,* and Isabella Walker* (Australia). *Class 2.*—H. Dillon (New Zealand).

Late for February.—*Class 2.*—Grace McPhee (Australia).

Late for March.—*Class 1.*—Nora Huson.*

RESULTS FOR YEAR 1923 OF STUDENTS ABROAD.

PRISCILLA WALKER (Australia)	10	1st Class	5	distinctions.
ISABELLA WALKER	11	"	4	"
HERBERT WALKER	7	"	1	"
DONALD WALKER	7	"	0	"
GRACE MCPHEE	7	"	0	"

I hope to recognise Priscilla's and Isabella's excellent work throughout the year by sending them a book as soon as possible.

THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF THE LATE J. DOUGHTY.

THE Holy Ghost, a divine Person indwelling each one of us, has come, and is here specially to glorify that Person in the Godhead who has become Man and glorified the Father here. It is at once wonderful and serious to be indwelt by a divine Person, and it behoves us most seriously to consider the true character of the mission of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. We may be fully assured that He will not depart the least bit from anything that He has been sent for, and therefore we cannot have His support and guidance unless we keep in line with His mission.

Although there is much necessary and most important instruction throughout the epistles generally as to the Spirit and His work, yet the definite character of His mission seems to be more particularly set forth in John 14. 15, 16. . . . It is well to remember that He has not come to make Himself an Object, but to engage our spiritual affections with the Son, the Father's Object, the one Person in the Godhead who is in Manhood. Thus we are never instructed to put our faith in the Spirit, nor to pray *to* the Spirit, but to pray *in* the Spirit. In considering the subjective side of things we need to be careful and watchful against their becoming an object. The one object of the Holy Ghost is the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and in Him we have the Father and God.

In John 14 the Father has sent the Comforter, the *Paraclete*, in the name of the Son to bring all things to the remembrance of the chosen witnesses,

H

in order that we might have a perfectly true record of all that Jesus said and did when here. This is a most important consideration and thoroughly settles all questions as to the authenticity of the four accounts of the mission of Jesus. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth, so that the followers of Jesus should not only have the correct words and a correct record of all that He brought into this world, but have the spirit of it all. Exactitude of letter and exposition apart from the *spirit* of truth has landed even gifted men in hopeless confusion. It is by the presence of the Spirit we have the mind of God as recorded in the letter of scripture and as set forth in the glorified Jesus. It is by the Spirit that we know that the Son is in the Father and the saints in the Son, and the Son in the saints. What a blessed heavenly circle indeed. It is by the Spirit the Son leaves His own peace here and gives it to His own. It is by the Spirit our hearts are kept untroubled in a troubled scene. In John 15 the Son sends the Comforter from the Father, the Spirit of truth from the Father as the One who would bear witness concerning the Son, and who would enable the disciples to bear witness also. Therefore we may safely conclude that as long as we have the Holy Ghost no combination of Satan and man will be able to extinguish the witness or testimony to the divine Person of Jesus come in flesh and eternally existing in glorified Manhood.

John 16 is even more definite still as to the mission of the Holy Ghost. The presence of the Spirit and the absence of Jesus run together, and are inseparable. Indeed, one hangs on the other. How encouraging it is to be assured that all that this present world is, all of it put together, cannot over-rule the demon-

stration of the Spirit in the saints. Let us listen most attentively to His demonstration in our souls as to this poor world with all its boasted glory. It is in a state of lawlessness ; it is without righteousness ; it is simply awaiting judgment. The sinless One, the righteous One, the executor of judgment, has left this world and gone to the Father. The Holy Ghost shews us another world, future things ; the Holy Ghost takes of the things of the Father and the Son and shews them to us. Let us then consider His mission and keep in line with Him, for He will not deviate from His mission.

THE BIBLE.—CHRONICLES.

IT must have been a means of great confirmation to Ezra and Nehemiah, and to those who came up from Babylon with them, to have known that their movements were in accord with God's previous activities and in keeping with His earlier dealings with His own. Their exercises did not relate to a new idea. It is true they were leaving Babylon ; and the great city might boast of its magnificence and antiquity. But after all, Babylon, and Nineveh too, were novelties compared to Adam, Seth, and Enoch !

It is this peculiar link with the past that gives to the Book of Chronicles a great interest. At first sight Chronicles might appear a repetition of part of Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings ; but when we look into it, we find it is in no way this, any more than the Gospel of John is a repetition of Matthew. Chronicles was evidently written after the return of the children of

Israel from their captivity in Babylon, as we may see from 1 Chronicles 6. 15 and 9. 1. Probably the author was Ezra. The apparent abruptness of the opening of the book attracts our attention and excites our inquiry as to the object and character of this section of scripture.

It is obviously divided into four parts : (1) the genealogies ; (2) the removal of Saul and the establishment of David with his labour and preparation for the temple ; (3) the days of glory in Solomon's reign ; and (4) days of decline with striking intervals of revival.

In the days of Ezra and Nehemiah the teaching conveyed in each of these sections would be of especial value. (1) The declaration of pedigree was most important in days of recovery from the corruption of Babylon. Who were really of Israel ? who were priests ? were questions of vast moment, as Nehemiah 7. 64 shews. (2) The features of faith in David and his adherents in the days of suffering, and the devotedness seen in the preparation for the house of Jehovah, as also the order of the temple service would have encouraged and regulated the faith and movements of the returning remnant. (3) The glory of Solomon's day must have constantly reminded them of the contrast of their own condition, while stimulating their hopes to wait for Christ, in whom greater glories would everlastingly be established. Then (4) the days of decline and the faithful dealings of God, whose eyes were ever watching the movements of men, would warn and encourage to avoid evil that invariably brought disaster, and to pursue good and the path of confidence in God, which ever resulted in blessing.

In the genealogies we may notice that in chapter 1 the natural line, or the line according to flesh, is given first, then the generation of faith, or God's choice. (See 1 Cor. 15. 46.) In chapter 2 Judah is given first. This is to introduce us to David. Bezaleel is also of Judah, also the house of Rechab. (See Jer. 35.) Spiritual things are important in Chronicles, as also matters relating to the temple. Hence the allusion to craftsmen (chap. 4. 14), byssus or linen workers (chap. 4. 21), and potters. (Chap. 4. 23.)

The reference to Jabez is very interesting. Do we pray like Jabez? God answered his prayer. He did not ask amiss. (James 4. 3.)

Simeon comes next. (Chap. 4. 24.) Judah and Simeon were the first to take up their inheritance. (Judges 1.) And the descendants of Simeon were marked by a similar energy in Hezekiah's reign. (Chap. 4. 41.) How very important to be spiritually energetic!

Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh are next given and their captivity explained. They were just the reverse of Judah and Simeon and did not take up their *full* blessing. Idolatry ensued and they were the first to go into captivity. (Chap. 5.)

The tribe of Levi comes next in great detail with the three divisions, Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. Samuel was a "son of Korah." Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, half Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher follow. Dan and Zebulun are left out. Idolatry marked Dan in a very solemn way. (See Judges 18, etc.) Why is Zebulun omitted? Is it because of the world bordering tendency referred to in Genesis 49? To dwell near the world is dangerous and leads us into bondage. The genealogies are imperfect and speak of a day of ruin.

Reference is again made to Benjamin to bring in Saul. But it is only to shew us his awful removal in chapter 10. Chapter 9 gives the detail as to the restoration from Babylon and the actual record of the genealogy of Judah and Benjamin (vers. 3, 7), priests (ver. 10), Levites (ver. 14), doorkeepers. (Ver. 17.) Singers, etc., all have their place. All is morally leading up to chapter 11, when all Israel come to David. In early or last days David must ever be the centre. Our David is Christ.

Our space is gone. I must refer to the other three sections in our next paper.

M. W. B.

“SORROWFUL, YET ALWAYS REJOICING.”

IN God's grace-system of blessing, the secret is known of constancy in devotedness to Him, of zeal in seeking the benefit of our fellow-men, and of joy in the Lord amidst our sorrows here, as we read, “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” To the scoffer such a thought is absurd; and to the ordinary unbeliever it is difficult, if not impossible to understand. How well it is when through grace believers realise it as a practical, everyday state!

Martyrs could cheerfully accept death, sustained in such adversity by the known love of Christ and the prospect of soon being with Him. They could even sing on their way to *the scaffold* or *the stake*; and, coming to our own day, when the way of truth is at least outwardly tolerated, we have seen exemplified the condition described as “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” Trials became, through prayerful looking to the Lord, leaning upon Him, learning Him, the

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occasion, if we cannot exactly say, the *means* of, the joy. Out of such abundance of blessing may flow, in a spiritual way at least, the further conditions, namely, “Poor, but enriching many ; as having nothing, and possessing all things.”

Souls desirous of knowing these conditions in a practical way willingly accept the admonition, “Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body.”

The secret of all piety is to be found in heart-appreciation of our precious Saviour, in His life down here, His death, resurrection, and exaltation. We may test ourselves as to how far we are governed by these momentous facts. Have I seen a moral beauty in Jesus far surpassing any seen elsewhere, beauty which has produced in my soul a steadfast desire to be like Him and with Him ? Have I considered His death as the proof and expression of a *love* which would remove, at the cost of His unspeakable sufferings, *everything* that lay between Him and me ? Have I learned inwardly in my soul that He now lives, a Man out of death, who is pleased to claim me as one of “His own,” associating me with Himself in a new resurrection position and relationship before His God and Father ? Do I know Him now as my personal, almighty Friend, ever gracious, glorified in the highest place ? If so, I cannot but enjoy the prospect of being perfectly like Him, and being with Him for ever ; and meantime have, through the Spirit given, the present good of my heavenly portion and prospect.

This is something of what scripture speaks of as “the heavenly calling.” (Heb. 3. 1.) It is not merely the hope of going to heaven by-and-by, great as

this is, and certain, thank God, but also a present state corresponding to the hope: heavenly joy in the Lord, with corresponding experiences of being strangers and pilgrims on earth.

Very soon, alas! the church of God ceased to cherish the heavenly state and settled down to earthliness, with its pleasures, profits, social distinctions, and so forth. In our day the blessed God in infinite mercy and for the glory of His own name recalled His people to what had been given up, the enjoyment of the true christian calling; but what happened to the church originally is liable to be repeated, has, alas! been repeated, in the individual history of believers. All this was foreshadowed in the history of God's people in the wilderness long ago.

Israel lost confidence in God and sent spies to view the promised land. The report did not please them; they "despised the pleasant land," and appointed a captain to lead them back to Egypt. God would in consequence have cut them off but for the intercession of Moses. In mercy He spared the nation, though He should cut off those who were of full age at the time (Num. 14); and in the next chapter we get the fullest summary given perhaps anywhere in scripture of the many aspects presented typically of the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was as if God reverted to what He found in that blessed Man when all else had failed. He was the immovable basis upon whom everything rests for the just carrying out of all His purposes of blessing. He would interest His people in it too, for all the aspects are presented in the way of *offerings* to Him, namely, burnt offerings, sacrifices (a word commonly used for peace offerings), sin offerings and meat offerings, with oil

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and wine. God would thus remind *us* that He has (1) secured glory for His own name ; (2) established peace in regard of His redeemed people ; (3) removed sin which destroyed His complacency ; and (4) found one blessed Man who has done all His will and in whom He can eternally rest.

A special feature of this chapter (Num. 15) is the prominence given to oil and wine, in connection with the meat offerings particularly. The oil, typical of the Holy Spirit, indicates His close association with Christ in His perfect Manhood here up to death as “the Spirit of holiness” (Rom. 1. 4), and “the eternal Spirit.” (Heb. 9. 14.) The wine, also in connection with the meat offering, speaks of the deep, hidden joy which the Lord Jesus ever had in doing the Father’s will here, even in His sorrows and governmental sufferings. (Psa. 69. 30.) His word ever was : “I delight to do thy will. O my God.” He was thus the Leader in the path wherein His people are privileged to follow, “Sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing.”

That blessed One is entitled to the place of “Head of every man,” “Head of his body, the church” ; Head over the universe of God ! He is presented in some of His glories in Isaiah 49, though there seen as rejected by men ; and it is striking that the apostle applies verse 8, without hesitation, to believers of this period—to Christians ; note particularly 2 Corinthians 6. 2. He does so because he sees them identified with their exalted Head in glory, accepted in Him, in union with Him, certain of being perfectly like Him and with Him for ever.

“Ministers of God” of verse 4 of such an order as that, do not require to be distinguished by outward attire. Except in the case of John the Baptist, we find

nothing of it in the New Testament, either for approach to God or to attract or affect the multitude. The Saviour died to deliver His people from "dead" works (Heb. 9. 14), religious ceremonial and traditional observances. What God looks for in His ministers, according to our chapter, is blamelessness in endurance, afflictions, necessities, straits, pureness, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, and so forth ; all flowing from hearts imbued with the spirit of Christ, and for His sake.

J. R. K.

THE CROSS IN CORINTHIANS.

TWO giant pillars stood at the entrance of Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem like sentinels guarding its wonders and secrets beyond, one called Jachin (he that establishes) and the other called Boaz (in strength), suggestive of chapters 1 and 2 of Paul's first epistle to the saints at Corinth, since he found such a lack with them as to this precious truth, "the temple" and its spiritual constitution. This line of ministry, like the two pillars, the cross and the Spirit, is what was needed by them and by God's people in our day, even though idolatry and philosophy do not take the same form as then, nevertheless its principles hold the hearts of all men to-day apart from the emancipating power of the Spirit of God. The cross of Christ, now an accomplished fact (chap. 1) and the Spirit of God having come here to take the place of Christ (chap. 2), makes the temple in a spiritual way available to all men, first as the house of God : "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the peoples," and, secondly, the temple as a

place where the oracles of God are to be found and the beauty of the Lord seen. (Psa. 27. 4.)

It is indeed a wonderful thing to know *where* the mind of the Lord can be known, light received, and His beauty seen. This is in the temple and the house, both of which can only be established on territory unknown and untrodden by the natural man—man in the flesh. This ground can only be reached through the cross of Christ, hence its value and importance at such a juncture in the history of God's people. It became the opportunity to bring to light what met His approval, and also, the more so, the intrinsic worth of His Person as the One who held everything in His hands and the One who never broke down. Decline had set in at Corinth followed by sin, and the fellowship was jeopardised in consequence. What was to be done? Paul, acquainted in a priestly way by the household of Chloe, *writes*, doubtless after much prayer and spiritual exercise and agony of soul Godward, as he sees the enemy making such inroads upon the vintage of God at Corinth. He might have chosen to go to them, but NO, he writes; and this remains for us in our day as it was for them in their day, and in his writing and its spiritual style establishes a divine principle of dealing with such moral elements at all times.

Let us just look for a figure of speech found in Numbers 4. 7, 8. Here we see that the work of the priest was to cover the holy vessels before being carried by the Kohathites, and the following are the coverings of the table of shewbread, typical, I suppose, of all who are in the christian fellowship, the fellowship of His Son: first by a cloth of blue put upon the table, then a scarlet cloth, and lastly a covering

of badgers' skins. Blue being the heavenly colour might suggest our viewing the saints according to divine thoughts concerning them, as Paul does in 1 Corinthians 1. 2 : "Sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." (New Trans.) We might say then, first Paul puts the cloth of blue on the table, a very priestly act on his part, to gain their ears for what the Lord would say to them through him ; secondly, jealous for the glory of the Lord, the One who alone is worthy of glory, he clears the ground by bringing in the truth of the cross, as the place where all man's glory is paled into shame. And he closes his word to them on that line : "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." This we might say was like the priest placing the scarlet cloth upon the cloth of blue. The saints at Corinth were wearing their scarlet clothes before the time, so to speak, for we shall all be glorified at His appearing, but this is the time of His rejection, hence how unseemly for us to glory in men or their attainments. They have all been condemned in that cross. How good for us if we accept it and give glory only to Him by being in the dust ourselves, by judging every exalting thought in our own hearts because it robs Him of His rightful place. How the apostle would be endeared to their hearts in all this, and how it would affect us and others if our relations with one another were on these lines. May the Lord help us in it, for His name's sake.

The apostle, so to speak, undignifies the saints at Corinth by saying, as it were, that the death of the cross is the kind of death they deserved to die, but Christ was crucified for them. Hence he would know nothing amongst them "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." What an ignominious death it was, and how

inconsistent for us to glory in the presence of such love that would take our place. He alone is worthy.

If the cross puts man out of count altogether in all his faculties, philosophical or otherwise, that is negative ministry. What then is positive? In the place of the *mind of man*, unseated by the truth of the cross, we have the Spirit of God, and He and He alone has the oracles and is able to answer every inquiry found amongst His people at all times, and is able also to place the beauty of the Lord upon His people. If we want the truth of the temple locally, for it is a local thought, save in Ephesians 2. 21, where it is spoken of as universal and going on to completion, "groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord," we must see to it that temple conditions are found with us, first by taking account of ourselves and all His as sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, and never lower the dignity that grace alone has put upon us; secondly, let the cross of Christ have its rightful place over our own spirits practically; and, thirdly, the covering of badger skins. This covering would bring before us that no outward show of stateliness or anything imposing in the saints should be seen that would offer a target to the enemy, but our protection should be what is small, like the badger, but proof against all that appeals to us from the world, the flesh, or the devil. What a holy and healthy exercise it would be if all God's people took this up practically and intelligently so that temple conditions might be found in every locality; that is, a company of saints who loved one another as sanctified in Christ Jesus and gave no glory to any save He who alone is worthy, and were content to be small and unpretentious here spiritually and religiously, that temple

conditions and temple light and beauty might be available for all. He was crucified in weakness but raised in power. (2 Cor. 13. 4.) The cross weakens us, but makes for power according to God.

More might be said and elaborated upon, but sufficient to give just an outline of what seems to be the import of the cross in Corinthians we hope has been given. We will leave our readers to work it out in prayerful exercise before God for personal and local profit.

F. G. W.

PSALM 23.

THE short and well-known twenty-third Psalm is characteristically beautiful in that it sets forth One who has perfect confidence in and dependence on God.

Happy is the Christian who moves in the world with this psalm in his heart, this language on his lips. None can disturb his peace. But even the most perfect Christian cannot altogether attain to what is depicted here, for this language can only truly come from the mouth of the dependent Man, Christ Himself. Such a life as His must have given great pleasure to God, for it was the sort of life God had ever been looking for in a man, but which He had never found until that moment. Even His own Israel, the people that He brought out of bondage that they might seek after Him, and to whom He taught His own desires, displaying Himself as Jehovah, never came out in accordance with those desires in a practical way; they would not be "shepherded." But here was a Man, who not only knew His will, but came to do it, and so it was that the Son of God was found in

dependence. "JEHOVAH IS MY SHEPHERD," the psalm begins. Jesus put Himself under the guidance of God at the outset, as the gospels shew us. (Luke 2. 49.) He would be influenced by none other than God Himself. It was a world of weakness and want into which He was born. But He did not come under its influence, for His confidence was in God—"JEHOVAH IS MY SHEPHERD ; I SHALL NOT WANT." Nevertheless Jesus took a low place among mankind, not only that He might be available to the least, but also to display what was God's will for all, namely, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Such were the circumstances in which the blessed Lord was found ; indeed, so low was the path that He had to say to one who wished to follow Him : "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Yet in spite of this He could ever say, with His gaze directed upward to His heavenly Father : "HE MAKETH ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES : HE LEADETH ME BESIDE STILL WATERS." Where, we may well ask, were the green pastures ? Where were the still waters ? I believe they were to be found in simply doing God's will ; nothing makes us more unhappy than the consciousness of displeasing God. Jesus found His delight in fulfilling the law of God and in doing His will. He *walked* for God's pleasure, He *worked* in His service, He delighted to *speak* of Him, He loved to *dispense* His blessings, and, in short, He *lived* for God.

Perhaps we get an instance of the "still waters" in John 4. The scripture says, "He must needs go through Samaria" ; moreover, it states that "Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." This is one of the unique incidents where we read of Jesus being weary ; that He was

longing for refreshment we may judge from what He says to the woman : "Give me to drink." It was her heart that He wanted, and He did not let her go until He had won that heart. What refreshment then to *His* heart ! "HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS. HE RESTORETH MY SOUL." As He carried on His service, Jesus was confronted by many opposing questioners, whose jealous eyes were always watching to find something whereby they might accuse Him. But He, passing under their scrutiny with perfect calmness, could manifest to all that His was a "path of righteousness," and one that brought glory to God's name. "HE LEADETH ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE."

Thus Jesus passed on, but as He was passing He had the end in view, His death. Yet even death could not perturb Him. Many times He told His disciples of what He was about to suffer, but He did not falter a step. His strength was in God, so that He could say, "YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL : FOR THOU ART WITH ME ; THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME." There *was* a shadow, and He felt it, but—blessed Lord !—His trust was in God who could preserve Him, and thus the rod and the staff were a comfort to Him, for He was still doing God's will. Then when the hour was come, and He was seen on the cross surrounded by those who hated Him, He could even pick out that which was of God around Him there ; the wonderful faith of the dying thief, for instance, must have been a "feast" for His eyes, and a cheer to His heart. "THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES."

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It was at this point that God, as it were, spreads a veil over the whole scene. His holy Son in the path of obedience was about to bear the hiding of His face, the weight of judgment for sin, and finally death itself. We get a glimpse of what it meant in the previous psalm. But Christ met death in the light of resurrection. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades," David had said prophetically, "neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." If He entered the valley with confidence God would see to it that there was an adequate answer. So the third day the sun rose on an empty tomb. On that glorious morning Christ was raised out of death by the power of God, and now He has been exalted by His right hand. Because He "loved righteousness, and hated iniquity," God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His companions. Jesus, the One who had walked so patiently in the will of God, can now rejoice in the perfect fulfilment of that will, and in His victory over death and all Satan's power.

"THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL; MY CUP RUNNETH OVER." We, too, as Christians can rejoice with Him, can catch, as it were, the overflowings of His cup. He has brought a sphere of endless life out of a scene of death, and in the centre of that sphere He stands as the Firstbegotten from the dead. "SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE: AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH FOR EVER." That stream of goodness and mercy is following Him even to-day; wherever He vouches, blessing at once springs up, and goodness and mercy flow forth. And where is it all to end? "IN THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH FOR EVER."

C. O. H.

RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“As for *me*, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” (Psa. 17. 15.)

“For *we* shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3. 2.)

WHOM have we, Lord, in heaven, but Thee ?
Whom here on earth below ?
We wait Thy blessed face to see,
Thy precious love we know !

The Holy Ghost to us is given,
To seal us as Thine own ;
That in *this world* where Thou art not,
Our heart should be Thy throne.

Where Thou shalt rule—as doth the sun,
Unchallenged in his might—
Throughout a never-ending day,
Its life, its warmth, its light.

Thy love, O Lord, our portion is,
And all Thy grace benign ;
Thy precious words, as garlands, fresh,
Around the heart entwine.

The precious things the Spirit gives,
With heavenly lustre bright ;
Gleam brightly to us here below ;
Enrapturing our sight.

In them we see the earnest blest
Of all those thoughts of love,
Which brought Thee here, that *we* may reach
Thy glorious throne above.

We praise Thee, Lord, as soon above,
To gaze upon Thy face ;
And with the whole redeemèd sing
The glory of Thy grace.

T. F.

FAITHFULNESS.

WHAT a stay for the heart it is to know that God is faithful by whom we have been called to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. There is no breakdown or failure there. But what about *our* faithfulness to the position into which we have been called? Moses in his song in Deuteronomy 32 alludes to the children of Israel as a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness. As a consequence of faithfulness being lacking there was no entering into the joy of the possession of what was in the mind of God for them, and one sees from Jeremiah 2. 2 how delightful they were to Jehovah when faithful to Him. The Apostle Paul can speak of the saints as faithful in Christ Jesus and of Onesimus as a faithful brother. The Lord is asking to-day, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward?"

BIBLE STUDY AND LENA'S LETTER.

SUBJECT : NEW BIRTH AND THE NEW MAN.

New birth is the truth taught by the Lord in John 3. "Except a man be born again [or anew] he cannot see the kingdom of God." Through new birth a man has a place in new creation. Through God's work in him, when done, known only by God, he has a new spiritual origin—a new source or beginning before God—and comes under the sway of grace. (Compare James 1. 18 and John 3. 6.)

Nicodemus, as a student of the prophets, ought to have known that Israel needed *renewing* to have a part in God's kingdom. (See Ezek. 36. 25-28 and Jer. 31. 33.)

The new man. New birth must be antecedent to the new man—an order of man "which according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness." (Eph. 4. 24.)

The Lord Jesus Christ, by His death, broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile "that he might form the two in himself into *one new man*" (Eph. 2. 15, New Trans.), a man after an entirely new order. In Colossians 3. 10 "*the new man*" is contrasted with "*the old man*" (which expresses our state as children of Adam), and the believer is looked upon as having *put off* the old man and *put on* the new man (the state proper to one who is a new creation in Christ Jesus).

Now he is “renewed into full knowledge according to the image of him that has created him.” (Col. 3. 10.)

This is how Christ lives in the saints and His traits are formed and developed in them.

Write an essay on our subject.

[*Replies to be sent to “LENA,” Grasmere, Burgess Hill, Sussex.*]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I think most of you have enjoyed studying the subject of Baptism, judging from the replies sent in. I have especially enjoyed reading some of the answers to Question 1, which shew a true grip of the subject.

I think the Lord would stir us up to recognise where the faith of our parents have placed us by baptism and to accept death and burial with reference to this scene, which will practically make any participation in the interests of this world impossible and give us to make as definite a choice as Moses. (Read thoughtfully Heb. 11. 24-26.)

We sometimes sing :

“Unto Thy death baptisèd,
We own with Thee we died :
With Thee, our Life, we’re risen,
And shall be glorified.”

If we only let this truth have its full effect upon us, our lives would testify to it in a far deeper way. Don’t you think so ?

That the Lord may help us each in this matter is the earnest prayer of

Yours affectionately,
LENA.

List of Replies for May.

Subject : BAPTISM.

Class 1.—Cissy Allison,* Mary Brown,* Elsie Buckley,* Grace Eayrs,* Dorothy Moorhouse,* Isabel Mayo,* Ruth Musson,* Grace Pye, Grace Railton, Nellie Railton, Mary Railton,* Ethel Schneider, Edna Storey,* George Palmer,* Eleanor Tedbury, Albert Tipler,* Freda Watts,* Mildred Watson.

Class 2.—Dorothy Boggis, Elsie Evered, Olive Norris, Irene Rusling, Kathling Suckling, Eunice Palmer, Freda Parker, C. Warner.

Class 3.—Mercy Satchwell.

Late for February.—*Class 1.*—Florence Merritt* (New Zealand), Priscilla Walker,* Isabella Walker.* *Class 2.*—Herbert Walker (Australia).

Late for April.—*Class 1.*—Robert Phillips* (New York).

THE MAN OF GOD.

1 KINGS 13. 1-26. There are several features of interest in relation to the man of God mentioned in these verses. He came out of Judah where God was known and owned and went by the word of the Lord to Bethel where God was unknown and disowned. He came with a very definite commission and with clear instruction how to act. His commission was to cry against the altar, to announce the birth of Josiah, and to shew that God delighted in mercy. His instructions were not to eat or drink among a people who had so dishonoured God, and in that way discountenance the condition of things he found prevailing all around him and at the same time shew that he thought with God.

We learn that purpose of heart was needed, and at the beginning he took a bold stand. Then the tests came along, and at first he answered to them by refusing the proffered refreshment and reward the king wished to give him. If Satan cannot succeed by a frontal attack he will fall back upon other methods. We have great need to be on our watch against the wiles of Satan.

There was an old prophet in the land and Satan made use of him to beguile the man of God into the pathway of disobedience to the word of God. The old prophet was himself going on in unfaithfulness to Jehovah; had it not have been so God would not have needed to send another to cry against the altar. There was no separation from the evil, but there was toleration of the evil, consequently there was no testimony *against* the evil. To be found in associations

that are not of God must mean the lack of spiritual power in life and testimony. What a sad example Lot is of this. In such a state how we like those who we feel are more spiritual than we are to come down to us, and thus by having fellowship, association, and communion with us to sanction our own unfaithfulness. May we learn the lesson the Lord would have us do from this incident, the lesson of dependence upon and obedience to the communications of His mind given to us from time to time.

1 KINGS 20. 28. From this verse we learn that God will vindicate the greatness of His name, His strength and His power. The Syrians said, "The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys." How man would like to shut God up in His heaven and out of His earth. How slow he is to recognise that the valleys are dependent upon the hills for refreshment and fruitfulness. It reminds us of those who when God was intervening in judgment in Revelation 11 were ready to give glory to the God of *heaven*. But God at once put in His claim to the earth, and the announcement is made, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ . . . and the nations were angry." The Syrians had to learn that God was God and not man.

2 KINGS 23. 16, 17. In these verses we are taken back to the words spoken by the man of God at the beginning of our paper. Josiah, of whom the man of God had spoken, is now on the throne and is seeking to walk after the Lord. It is a bright moment in the history of the kingdom of Judah. The book of the covenant had been found in the house of the Lord and read, and Josiah set to work to carry out its instructions by breaking down idolatry in Judah, and in due

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course came to the altar, of which the man of God had spoken, and fulfilled the word of God regarding it spoken three hundred and fifty years before. How surely will every word of God be fulfilled; not one will be allowed to fall to the ground. In the work of destruction the sepulchre of the man of God is brought to light, but his bones are respected. God cares for the bones of His saints.

2 CHRONICLES 25. 7-9. Amaziah is taught a lesson which each of us need to learn. How apt we are to turn to the world for help when our trust and confidence should be in God. How clearly we are warned against unholy alliances. In 2 Corinthians 6 the word is so very definite, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship [or participation] hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" The Lord was not with Israel. They were treading the paths of lawlessness. What an arm to lean upon! As the Psalmist says, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes," and again, "Vain is the help of man." On the other hand, if our trust is in God alone we shall learn "that power belongeth unto God." Amaziah thought he would be a loser by obeying the injunction of the man of God. What are a hundred talents to God who says, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine"? The man of God answers with the greatest confidence, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this."

Let us then never turn to the arm of flesh, but at all cost tread the path of absolute dependence upon God in refusing every diverse yoke which only tends

to poverty of soul and spiritual weakness, and we shall prove the truth of 2 Corinthians 6. 18, "I . . . will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." J. R. T.

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"OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY."

No. 1.

IT is comforting to faithful hearts in a day of declension to reflect that God has always had His reserves : men or women who come forward in a crisis. This distinguished line will surely be continued till the end, and the devotees of Christ will fill up its ranks, however great may be the departure and weakness around.

What a path lies open to every lover of Christ as the footsteps of the men of God since Abel are followed with reverent and admiring gaze ! Days of weakness and failure only serve to provide the dark background upon which the fidelity of God's reserves shines the brighter. The Spirit of God has prepared the record (and God Himself has preserved it for us amidst fierce opposition), a long record of the saints who, in their zeal and faithfulness to God, sorrowed, suffered, and died.

Is the record in the holy scriptures merely one of interest, or does its perusal produce like emotions and desires within our breasts ? This must be so if we read it prayerfully, but, alas, there is great neglect in the reading of the holy scriptures. Surely the days in which we live call for fidelity to Christ. The opportunity is now and it will soon be past for ever. May we have loyal and faithful hearts in this day.

That day will be but a reflex of the measure in which

"OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY." 145

we have loved and served Christ out of a pure heart in this day.

It is the present moment that demands our unswerving fidelity to Christ.

In the days of the judges, days of sorrowful decline from God's purpose, an Othniel, an Ehud, and a Shamgar come to light in turn. (Judg. 3.)

Each stands for God in his own distinctiveness, and is used to bring deliverance to the people of God. More pronounced still is God's sovereign intervention in an even weaker day, for Deborah and Jael, two women, shine in their fealty to Jehovah and His interests when evil was commonly practised and many doing their own will. Through the faithfulness of Deborah, Barak and his ten thousand men "*at his feet*" become instruments in God's hand for the overthrow of His enemies.

But the chief honour is given to a woman—Jael! *She* had remained true to Jehovah though in difficult surroundings, for her husband, though having once severed himself from a people under judgment (compare Num. 24. 22 and Judg. 4. 11), had later on made peace with the enemy of God and His people. (Judg. 4. 17.) So Sisera flees to that tent, thinking to find refuge. But Jael will brook no compromise. She has no commandment for what she does, but acts instantly and with consideration only for God and His interests. Such loyalty provokes a song, and Jael gains a place in the imperishable record of devoted saints.

The faithful line is continued in Gideon and his three hundred men. Gideon himself may be of little account humanly: the least in his father's house and his thousand the poorest in Manasseh. But he

recognises the failure within and the enemies of God around, and stands for the maintenance of the food supply. He is threshing in seclusion to provide food for the people. God honours such exercises in the weakest day. The saints are to be fed and this can only be done by sacrifice. In Matthew 24 the Lord speaks of a difficult day without parallel, but He immediately raises the question of food: Who will give food to the household? (Matt. 24. 45.) "Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, to secure it from the Midianites." (Judg. 6. 11.) God's reserve men are ever found in spirit near the winepress, tasting the bitterness of all the breakdown in their spirits, but consciously responding joyously to God. Theirs is a heart which indeed "knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." (Prov. 14. 10.) They feel keenly the thinning of the ranks and the desolation around. But as near the heart of Christ in church affection they enjoy consciously "the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge."

Gideon was not on "individual lines," for he includes others: "If the Lord be with us," he says. Elijah says later, "*I* only am left"; but not so Gideon: and the exercises of Gideon, entered upon and pursued with God, lead to the coming in of three hundred valiant men to swell the ranks. So it is ever in a day of weakness. If we think we only are left, God may set us aside as lacking in priestly affections. Others may not move out openly as yet, but if *we* move in fidelity to Christ, others are sure to follow. Peter was *told* to follow, but John was already following. (John 21. 20, 22.) A true follower does not turn to see if others are following; he is content with the path. Has it not been hallowed by the very footsteps

of Jesus, whose path lay through suffering to glory? The darker the background, the weaker the day, the greater the ruin, so much the more does a man of God shine out. With him it is not so much an outlook *around* as a look *upward*. Moses, when faced with a difficulty, "looked this way and that way." (Exo. 2. 12.) He did not look up! We are told to look "stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith." (Heb. 12. 2.)

Passing on through the Book of Judges, we find God raising up "saviours," Jephthah and Samson amongst others, and even later when everything seemed to be gone, for "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," God still preserves in the conscience of the people a bulwark against the sin of Benjamin. (Chap. 20. 1, 11-13.) J. H. T.

THE BIBLE.—CHRONICLES.

IN our previous paper we briefly noted the four main ideas presented in the Books of Chronicles, and we considered a little in detail the genealogies given at the beginning of the book.

The first Book of Chronicles in its history begins with the removal of Saul and the exaltation of David. (Chap. 10. 6., 11. 1.) The judgment upon Saul is very solemn, and a reason is given for it, as is general in the Books of Chronicles. (Chap. 10. 13.) The obvious warnings contained in these reasons need scarcely be dwelt upon. All had a bearing on the behaviour suitable to God's people who were returning from Babylon. If God removed Saul for this, we cannot touch it, they would have said. David's mighty men are next brought before us. Their actions suggest

a bold and fearless courage in the interest of Christ, and real devotedness and nearness to Him. Chapter 11. 15-19, is full of precious instructions to us. Our David, the Lord Jesus Christ, greatly appreciates affection and devotedness to Him, like He appreciated Mary's action. (Mark 14. 1-9.) Man may call it "waste," the Spirit says, "very costly." It is this personal attachment to the Lord, real love to Him, that gives value to all service.

Chapter 12 brings another series of exercises before us. Sharers in Christ's rejection (ver. 1); separation to Him (ver. 8); loyalty to Him and His cause (vers. 16-18); desire to make Him King (vers. 23-27); intelligence in the times (ver. 32.); capability of walking together, keeping rank (vers. 33-38); and, lastly, sharing the company of David. I wonder if my young readers have taken these steps in soul history. Let us think them over and ask ourselves the questions: Am I a sharer in Christ's rejection? Am I separate and loyal to Christ? Am I devoted to His interests? Do I know what is suitable behaviour for to-day? Am I keeping rank with my brethren, having a perfect heart? Only thus shall we know the company of Christ!

The ark is the next great interest. Good intentions alone are not enough; God's things must be done God's way (chap. 15. 13), and a reason is given as usual. Many professing Christians will despise us if we thus act. (Chap. 15. 29.)

It is interesting to note David's song in Chronicles. His songs are at the *end* of Samuel, and are in connection with his deliverance. Here the song is in regard to the ark taking its place. Think of Ezra writing and enjoying chapter 16. 35.

The ark introduces the subject of the suited dwelling-place for God ; but David must wait. (Chap. 17.) God's things must be done in God's way and God's time. David's victories lead to dedication. (Chap. 18. 7, 11.) Good for us if every victory means something for God. It was different in Judges 8. 24-27. Enemy after enemy is vanquished, and even Satan's attack (chap. 21) yields eventual gain and is overruled to lead to exercise which determines the site of the temple. (Chap. 22. 1.) The death of Christ is the foundation of the wonderful system of priesthood and praise.

Solomon now comes before us, and David's charge is solemn and encouraging. The thought of a "son" and "God's house" are closely linked. The material was gathered in days of trouble (chap. 22. 14) ; the beauty of the house is displayed in days of peace and rest. Are *our* troubles yielding material for such a day ? The psalms were written through days of suffering ; they were chanted in days of glory ! The courses of the priesthood, the service of the Levites, the order of the singing all find their place through *David's* exercises. Two striking sentences are uttered by David : all had been prepared in trouble and was in readiness in chapter 22. 14-15, and the exhortation follows, "Arise therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee." Affection had devoted its gifts to God in chapter 29. 3-5 ; and the appeal is made, "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord ? "

It is easy to understand the force with which all this history would come to hearts returning from Babylon to build Jehovah's house in Jerusalem. Trouble and trial are inseparable from service ; con-

secration and devotion are essential if the work of God is to be carried on. Who then is willing *to-day*? All that is given, first comes from God (chap. 29. 14), and the result of all is that Solomon is magnified exceedingly. What joy to our hearts to see Christ magnified as the fruit of our willing offerings! M. W. B.

SECRET DIFFICULTIES.

PERHAPS no difficulties are so hard to face as secret ones. Many problems are solved even as they are told into a sympathetic ear. Others seem less by the very telling, but difficulties which, owing to their character, cannot be told seem greater because they have to be carried alone.

1. HARD QUESTIONS.

Many thinking young people weigh over the various problems that arise in this complex life of ours, and are often confronted with questions quite beyond their power to answer. In vain they look around for some one in whom they could confide and to whom they could make known their difficulties. Infidel thoughts arise in the heart, fanned by the open agnosticism which abounds to-day; doubts as to many vital truths of Christianity, which they would not utter, crowd into their minds.

Then comes the enemy's opportunity. "*Give it all up*; have a good time and enjoy yourself. Be happy and free," he suggests. Beware of the tempter's snare! Would you be *happy* if you stepped out of the light of the revelation of God in Christ into the dark gloom of hopeless agnosticism? Would you be *free* by giving up all that is precious, holy, and true for the blindness

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of unbelief in darkness and distance from God ?
NEVER !

What then is the remedy ? There is only one, and that is to bring your difficulties to Christ, the Son of the living God. He is the Sun whose beams dispel the darkness of unbelief. He is the true Solomon who can answer all your hard questions : "Christ the power of God, and the *wisdom* of God."

Get alone with Him and on your knees before Him, tell Him *all the truth*. Unburden your heart into His ear as to One perfectly sympathetic with your need and perfectly able to dissolve all your doubts. Do not keep anything back. The secret you keep back will be your hindrance. He would encourage you to entrust to Him every secret of your heart, every difficulty of your mind.

Then approach the word of God not with the pride that would claim ability to judge it, but with a readiness to let it judge you. Remember, we are of a fallen race, and that with the fall man's mind came under the power of sin and Satan. Our reasoning powers are limited, for we are finite ; our minds are darkened, for by nature we were away from God.

Pray for the divine light to shine in, and you will prove that even as the darkness flees before the light of the rising sun, so your difficulties will vanish in the presence of Jesus.

There is a solution to every problem in the word of God. Ask God by His Spirit to enable you to find that which will confirm your soul in a living faith in Him, and you will be both HAPPY and FREE.

F. S. M.

THE DOOR, AND THE SHEPHERD.

(JOHN 10.)

THE door is the way out, and the way in. There is what you leave behind, and what you enter into. The blind man of the previous chapter had found in Christ a way of *escape* from Judaism, a system under judgment, where all were in darkness and under the power of death; and at the same time a way *into* the sphere of eternal life. In that way it was salvation to him. Christ has been rejected by the world, has died out of it and left it, and the judgment of God rests upon it, "Now is the judgment of this world." The Spirit here is the witness of sin and judgment as to the world. It is a great thing to be delivered from such a world, a world that hates God and Christ. We follow Christ out of it, to find eternal life in Him on the resurrection side of death, to enter into a new sphere of life, in which Christ lives, where it is our privilege to abide with Him in the Father and in the Son, that is, in the love of the Father and the Son. It is impossible to have both worlds, it is impossible to be seeking enjoyment in the things of this world, and to have the enjoyment of eternal life. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

In this gospel we frequently get the thought of *following Christ*. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." In this gospel He is seen as rejected from the outset, so that following Him involves following Him *out of the world*. This we see illustrated in the blind man whose eyes the Lord opened, Christ was outside and he found himself with Him,

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“I am the door : if any one enter in by me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and shall go out and shall find pasture.” What characterises the new sphere which the Lord has opened up to us is *liberty*, and *satisfaction*. This is what would be known in the enjoyment of eternal life, the life more abundantly.

There is not only the thought of following Christ out of the world, but on the other hand *following Him into the sphere* into which He has entered as the risen One, gone back to God, to the Father. It is there we find eternal life. It is in our spirits that we follow Him, in faith and affection.

This would bring us to the *one flock*, for it is the common position and privilege of all the Lord's people ; we are on common ground, whether from among Jews or Gentiles, all the objects of the love and care of the one good Shepherd. He speaks of the sheep as *His own*, He has special interest in them, He has secured them at so great a cost, He laid down His life for the sheep, so that they are very precious to Him. He looks at them, too, as given to Him by the Father, “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” How perfectly secure they are in the keeping of the Father and the Son, they can never perish. Then He says, “I . . . *know my sheep*, and am known of mine.” With all the thousands of His sheep He knows each one individually, knows us by name ; we are not lost in the multitude. Each one of us is the object of the Shepherd's interest and care. He would lead us into the closest intimacy with Himself, into that same kind of intimacy which existed between Himself and the Father. “I . . . *know my sheep*, and am known of mine. As the

Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." We are, too, equally the objects of the love and interest of the Father ; He said, "I and my Father are one." In laying down His life for the sheep, He did it according to the Father's commandment ; He could say, "I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again." All this love of Christ and of the Father is to be known here and now, it is what gives present liberty and satisfaction. We shall not be sheep in heaven. In chapter 20 He speaks of His disciples as "brethren." That is a greater thought, an eternal relationship. While down here the sheep are exposed to dangers and enemies and need the care and protection of the Shepherd.

Our present happiness depends upon our personal appreciation of all that Christ is for us, and of the love and thoughts of the Father as revealed in Him. We can say with Paul, "The Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." We are too much disposed to speak in general terms, "we," "us," "you." The personal appropriation of divine love will not make us forgetful of others, on the contrary we shall rejoice to know that this love embraces all the children of God ; our love will go out to all. Love is never selfish, it is that which delivers us from selfishness.

What comfort to have such a Shepherd. He desires that we should know Him intimately and that we should follow Him ; He would lead us into green pastures, and beside still waters.

F. H. B.

“THE SECRET PLACE.”

“He that dwelleth in the secret-place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” (Psa. 91. 1.)

WHAT is “the secret place”? For the Psalmist it was the place where God as the Most High was known, and he who knew what it was to *dwell* there had the promise of abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. We must be close to the object to be under its shadow, and the thought of the Almighty brings strength and security and support with it. What safety there is for the One who dwells in that “*secret place*.”

To us God is not known as the Most High or the Almighty, but by the sweet name of “Father.” Where then, we might ask, is the *secret place* for God’s children? First we would ask, where was the secret place for the Lord when He was on earth? If we turn to John 1. 18 we shall find, “No one hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, *who is in the bosom of the Father*, he hath declared him.” That was the Lord’s secret place, the bosom of the Father. He had the full knowledge of being in the Father’s affection, in His heart of love. No malice of man, no storms of this world, could touch His repose there.

After a trying time of what *we* might call disappointment, when He had to pass “woe” on the towns where most of His mighty works were done because of their unbelief, He could turn to the Father in thanksgiving and praise, finishing up in words such as these, “All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son but the Father, nor does any one know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal him.”

(Matt. 11. 27, New Trans.) What a grand "secret place" to be in, but that is where He would lead us, and He would have us to realise that we are in the Father's affections too.

I think our secret place is found in John 14. 20. "In that day ye shall *know* that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." If we understand what those three precious words, "Ye in me," mean, we know what it is to be in the most blessed secret place. How true it will then be that He that dwells in the secret place of the Father's heart shall abide under the shadow of that Father's guiding hand.

Whatever adverse circumstances we may be allowed to pass through, the one who knows that "Home of rest" will not be disturbed, but will feel the beatings of that heart of love for him, and can recline there. If we learn this secret place we shall know the meaning of the last three words of our verse, "I in you."

Christ is no longer here except in His saints. May we know what it is to exhibit some of His traits in this world that has cast Him out during His absence and so be a testimony for our absent Lord, for His name's sake.

G. S. V.

THE CROSS IN GALATIANS.

IN the Epistle to the Galatians the distinctive character of Paul's gospel is seen by the fact that he received it direct from Christ in glory. This is found in chapter 1. 11, 12. Paul, a living example of the power of what he preached working in the affections, is shewn by what he says in chapter 2. 19, 20. These two factors are weighty to a degree, because

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of the power of the truth over his own soul, and such power that he recalls that when he preached to them his gospel Jesus Christ was evidently set before them as crucified; and the presentation of the cross in that way as being for God the *judicial end of man in the flesh, the legal system, and the world*, he marvelled that they were so soon shaken in mind. "Who hath bewitched you?" (Chap. 3. 1.) Judaising teachers, possibly from Jerusalem, had followed on after the apostle and very piously preached to them that unless they were circumcised and kept the law they would not be perfected Christians. Now to do this, the apostle could see, would undermine the whole foundation and destroy along with it the whole fabric of Christianity, as the foundation of man's recovery for God and his eternal blessing was laid in the DEATH OF THE CROSS.

Man in the flesh had been under probation and failed. The legal system had been applied to that man and he was unable to meet its demands, and the world system, religious or otherwise, had crucified Christ. What was to be done? God must act from HIS OWN side if man is to be blessed. Now it was at THAT MOMENT, when man's guilt reached its height at the cross, that God through the sacrifice of Christ judicially ended all these, namely, MAN IN THE FLESH, THE LEGAL SYSTEM, and THE WORLD. The legal system includes in Galatians circumcision, which was not of the law of Moses but of the fathers. (See John 7. 22.) This was done that a platform of pure grace founded on righteousness might be laid on which God could recover His creature MAN, and bring him into far higher blessings than ever could have been attained had he been able to keep the law. This higher blessing

is sonship by faith and the enjoyment of that by receiving of the Spirit of His Son, so that consciously in holy affection God can be addressed as, Abba, Father.

This is the essence of Christianity. Why then go on with man in the flesh? Why go on with the legal system? Why go on with the world? The apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ." (Chap. 2. 20.) Man in the flesh was parted with in the spirit and mind of the apostle. Have we parted with him? It is a serious question to face, let us face it in reality before God. Do I pander to man in the flesh or do I experimentally give him the place of the cross? To be marked by the love of independence, the love of honour or the love of power in any degree is to give man a place. The temptation to man in the garden of Eden bore directly on all these three points, but what a contrast when that BLESSED MAN was faced with the temptations in the wilderness. Satan says, Make these stones bread—be independent of God—cast Thyself down—receive honour from men—all these things will I give Thee and the glory of them—kingdom, power. These were put to Christ when at the extreme point of weakness physically, but He could say, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4. 10.) He was *pattern* for us, and the Spirit is *power*, so we can be clear of it morally in victory.

F. G. W.

PEACE.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." (John 16. 33.)

A BLISSFUL peace, found Lord in Thee for ever ;
Life's crystal waters, flowing pure and bright ;
The Spirit gives—no taint of sin can sever—
A cloudless day that knows no shade of night.

Peace, perfect peace—'mid toil and heart distraction—
Thy loved ones know, by waters calm and still :
They find in Thee their heart's full satisfaction,
And Thy deep love their deepest longings fill.

Eternal peace, and joy beyond all telling—
Our hearts would give to Thee their sweetest lays—
Love shed abroad, the Holy Ghost indwelling ;
Vessels of mercy formed for Thy praise.

T. E.

BIBLE STUDY AND LENA'S LETTER.

SUBJECT : NEW CREATION.

New creation is the new position into which a believer is brought *in Christ*. "If any one be *in Christ*, there is a *new creation* ; the old things have passed away ; behold all things have become *new* : and all things are *of God*." (See 2 Cor. 5. 17, 18, New Trans.) The apostle in this connection also explains, "If even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know Him *thus* no longer." (Ver. 16.)

The *new creation* stands in distinct contrast to the *first creation*, which was placed under Adam as head. Adam failed in his responsibility. Christ, the second Man, is the glorious Head of the new creation, and those who have died with Christ and have had part in His resurrection have no longer any standing in Adam but are *in Christ*. "In Christ Jesus neither is circumcision [Jew] anything, nor uncircumcision [Gentile] ; but *new creation*." (Gal. 6. 15, New Trans.)

It is interesting to note, too, the difference in the *order* presented. In the *first creation* we have, "*In the beginning* God created *the heavens and the earth* " first, and later man and his helpmeet. In God's *new creation* we have the Man Christ, risen first, presented, and those that are His, and lastly *the new heaven and new earth*. (Rev. 21. 1.) Prove by looking up scriptures.

Here I should like to add a few thoughts handed on to me by two of our loved brethren, as I think we often manifest confusion

of thought between *reconciliation* and *new creation*, and it is well to have the difference well defined.

(1) *Reconciliation* is a work for us, while *new creation* is a work in us.

(2) *Reconciliation* supposes a past history (see Col. 1. 21, 22), while *new creation* is something altogether *new* with no past history attached to it.

John 20. 1 and Acts 20. 7 suggest this (the *first* day of the week).

(3) *Reconciliation* is the crown of the old order of things, while *new creation* is the bringing in of what is entirely new.

It would be nice to look out more scriptures to support these statements.

Write an essay on our subject.

[*Replies to be sent to "LENA," Grasmere, Burgess Hill, Sussex.*]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I think you will agree with me that our subject of "Confession" is a very important and a very practical one; and, if we in any degree are to be "confessors" we need grace from above. In the first place we should never even *desire* to make confession of our sins and shortcomings to God, but for His grace.

We need a supply of this same grace to give us *boldness* to confess Christ in any measure in a hostile world; and I think all find that in the confession of faults to others we have wronged we need a good deal of grace to do it in the spirit of meekness which is fitting. But the supply is *for* us, "Grace to meet our every need," so we ought never to feel unprepared.

I am *very* sorry our numbers seem to be falling off. If any of our Searchers who have unavoidably missed a month, and feel thereby discouraged, have time to do it now, or would be able to send it along with the next study, I shall be quite pleased to correct and enter it, though late.

Try to *start* the study as soon as you get the magazine, and follow it up a little bit at a time each day, if possible, and then you will not feel so hurried at the end of the month.

Yours affectionately,

LENA.

List of Replies for June.

SUBJECT: CONFESSION.

Class 1.—Cissy Allison,* Mary Brown,* Elsie Buckley,* Grace Eayrs,* Robert Ireland, Dorothy Moorhouse,* Ruth Musson,* Grace Pye,* Grace Railton,* Nellie Railton, Mary Railton,* Irene Rusling, Ethel Schneider, Edna Storey,* Freda Parker,* George Palmer,* Eleanor Tedbury, Albert Tipler,* C. Warner, Mildred Watson.*

Class 2.—Elsie Evered, Olive Norris, Eunice Palmer.

Late for May.—*Class 1.*—Winnie Dunham, Robert Ireland.

Late for March.—*Class 2.*—Grace McPhee.

THE MAN OF GOD.

(1 TIM. 6.)

IN this chapter the apostle speaks of those who have been seduced from the faith and pierced *themselves* through with many sorrows.

He then exhorts his son Timothy with these words, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things." If we want to be delivered from these things and to make progress in the knowledge of God, there must be the fleeing. This suggests the possession of light from God as to the character of the things spoken of, and a determination of heart—in itself God given—to have nothing whatever to do with them. May these two things mark each of our readers.

If there is the fleeing there is the following. It is the principle of ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. How attractive to a heart knowing the love of God and the grace of Christ are the things spoken of in verse 11.

RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Wisdom in Proverbs 8 says, "I lead in the way of righteousness." Wisdom is Christ, and what a lead He gives! How in His pathway here He did alway the things which were right and in every way pleasing to God. The simple thought of righteousness is that which is right in the eyes of God. May we have grace to follow after it, recognising that it must be the foundation of happy relations with God—the first thing a man of God will have before his eyes.

GODLINESS.

This may not be an easy pathway, as is said in the

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second epistle, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." How quickly we learn in our christian pathway, in that new sphere of holy affection and relationships, that the world has no appreciation of godliness, and is ever eager to persecute those who with purpose of heart are following after godliness; but God in His grace gives us to prove the truth of verse 6 that "godliness with contentment is great gain," and it is, for it has a secret spring in it—that is, Christ is expressed.

FAITH.

Faith has been spoken of as light from God, and how good it must ever be to follow after that, bringing me into the present enjoyment of a whole realm of unseen realities. (See Heb. 12. 22–24.) Faith, too, which accredits *all* that God has said, can only come from knowing the One who has said it.

LOVE.

How fittingly this follows faith, which brings us livingly into touch with God, and so we learn the heart of God. The love of God has been so touchingly expressed in the gift of the Son of His love. It is a love that thought and planned for others, a love which desired for its object only the very best and found its *full* expression in that gift unspeakable; a love that was so blessedly declared by Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Have we true perception of what love is as it has been expressed? If so, how blessed it is to follow after love.

PATIENCE.

How wonderfully all these virtues are seen in God. What patience has marked Him in all His dealings

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with men, and how the fruits of His patience will be seen in the holy myriads He will surround Himself with through a blissful eternity. How we need patience. In Titus we read of those who are sound in faith, in love, in patience. Patience is something that has to be learned in the school of experience; the patience that endures, that suffers with joyfulness, but patience surrounded with the halo of coming glory.

MEEKNESS.

The apostle in 2 Corinthians speaks of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. What an example to have before our hearts! The day is coming when God will beautify the meek with salvation. (Psa. 149.) Meekness is the opposite of self-assertion, but at the same time is marked by great boldness in the face of the enemy. We read of Moses that he was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth, and he did not assert himself, but left God to vindicate him, and he is the man whom God chose to face the implacable enemy of His people, and he did not flinch.

How encouraging to contemplate the man of God following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. May the contemplation greatly move us in our affections away from those things that are not pleasurable to God and promote in us a desire to follow after those things which are pleasurable to Him and have been followed perfectly and fully by the One who stands forth in scripture so pre-eminently as the Man of God, the Man Christ Jesus.

J. R. T.

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“OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY.”

No. 2.

REFERRING to the Book of Ruth, we find Elimelech may leave God's land and God's interests because of famine, rather than seek His face as to its cause. But, "if thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." (Prov. 24. 10.) Notwithstanding, the line is continued in Boaz. He prospers, no doubt as having faced the crisis and famine exercises, and he becomes "a mighty man of wealth." God will ever have His faithful men. Eli may fail and his sons become perverse and lose all sense of what is due to God, but the boy Samuel is raised up as the fruit of Hannah's exercises. In the sweet and precious obscurity of prayer Hannah brings her own distinctive petition as discerning the need in Israel of a man to stand before God. She receives him as from God and presently yields the boy to Jehovah as her contribution to the faithful line, her song revealing the holy exultings of her soul in her act of sacrifice. (1 Sam. 2.)

Her brief prayer-song of ten verses covers beautifully the ways of God, not only recognising the principles of God's government toward Israel, but also the principle of sovereign grace, and then reaching forward to the establishment of the millennial kingdom in the Person of the Lord Jesus. A bright and strong link this in the chain of testimony.

Then the wife of Phinehas may pass away in the intensity of her exercises for the ark of God and His glory, but a child is born and it is a living child! Such exercises will be perpetuated. (1 Sam. 4. 20.)

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Later on when Saul fails God already has a man in reserve. Gloomy indeed as is Saul's failure, it only throws into greater relief a hitherto unannounced title of Jehovah, “the Hope of Israel” (1 Sam. 15. 29), as if God would rally faithful hearts around Himself in days of breakdown. This surely is a word to us in these closing days, that we may not faint, but that our hope and confidence might be in God—the living God! The “testimony in Jacob” and the “law in Israel” was to be made known to *each succeeding generation* in order “that they might set their hope in God.” (Psa. 78. 5–7.)

Then who does not rejoice in that bright page in David's history as he moves in all the lowly grace and dignity of the anointing—beautiful in appearance and of lovely countenance—suggesting in his ways and walk in a difficult day, even if ever so feebly, the perfection of Jesus as He moved in and out amongst the people, as in Luke's gospel. Then how faithfully David serves God and His interests and subdues God's enemies. These “first ways” of David secure God's approval and gain mention even in a later day. (2 Chron. 17. 3.)

Solomon early gives God His place, and as a consequence is blessed with unique wisdom and glory.

But failure has again to be recorded, and after a long period of sorrowful history Elijah comes to light and passes the test of faith. (1 Kings 17. 1–6.) As a man of God he first considers for God and stands singlehanded and full of power whilst he thinks only of God's claims. And if, after great exploits for God, he gives way to discouragement and learns that he is “not better than his fathers,” yet he is again used of God and finally passes up to heaven in triumph.

A Naboth will die rather than surrender "the inheritance of his fathers" to Ahab, who would turn a vineyard into a garden of herbs. Ahab would rob God of *His* fruit and joy in order to serve his own table. (1 Kings 21.) How like Laodicea, which has used that which was entrusted to it for its own satisfaction and aggrandizement. Attention to the Epistle to the Colossians would have preserved them, for Paul gave instructions that they were to hear it. (Col. 4. 16.) But Naboth is suggestive of Philadelphia: he "holds fast," he has "a little strength," and he keeps Jehovah's word. He recognises that what has been handed down to him has been secured at infinite cost. It is the inheritance of his fathers and he is prepared to die without vindicating himself. The Lord Himself will vindicate all such, as He vindicates Philadelphia. "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." (Rev. 3. 9.) And if Naboth dies the vineyard is not lost, for Elijah, the man of God, is there to dispute Ahab's possession. How striking, too, that in the execution of God's righteous judgment against Jezebel in this very matter, faithful men again come to light. Who would have expected such would be found in Jezebel's house? Yet when Jehu as God's anointed calls out, "Who is on my side? who?" two or three chamberlains look out to him and obey his word. (2 Kings 9. 32, 33.) So are the faithful ones constantly coming into evidence—later on there were such even in Cæsar's palace.

There are many others in this noble line—prophets, major and minor—men of God in all ages. Nehemiah could speak of his brother as "A FAITHFUL MAN, and feared God above many." (Neh. 7. 2.) This line has

THE GOSPEL AS FOR THE HOUSEHOLD. 167

reached down even to us, and as the breakdown is viewed by us opportunity is afforded us to take our place in this noble succession. If so many, alas ! refuse it, there is greater need for a faithful few to follow. It will have to be written over each one in "the way," "Of whom the world was not worthy," but the day of Christ will bring sufficient compensation to such, for *He* will have His rightful place then. "He shall have dominion" and "all nations shall call him blessed." Meanwhile

"There is rest in the blessed yoke,
That knows no will but His,
That learns, from His path, and the words He spoke,
What that loving patience is !"

J. H. T.

THE GOSPEL AS FOR THE HOUSEHOLD.

GOSPEL ADDRESS.

WE have warrant in the scriptures for addressing the gospel message to the saints, for, as you all know, doubtless, the Epistle to the Romans was addressed to the saints at Rome, and it unfolds, as no other epistle does, the gospel. It is, indeed, said to be the gospel of God concerning His Son. (Rom. 1.) And so I have in mind to address the saints ; particularly parents, in connection with their households, and incidentally to speak to the young.

God takes account of parents, for normally the households of believing parents should also believe. God encourages parents in the message to the jailor at Philippi, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house.*" (Acts 16. 31.) It is not that the parents can save their children exactly,

although they may save them from certain features of the world; but the result of the message to the jailor would be to turn the heart of the parent to God. I have been encouraged to turn to this passage because it holds out great hope for parents, God saying that He will pour out His Spirit upon their seed. Wonderful promise! We may well be encouraged, those of us who have households, to pray in the light of this promise, as God says, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed." (Isa. 44. 3.)

Those of us who have households know by experience what the flesh is in our children. I often read Jacob's blessing of the tribes in contrast with that of Moses. Wonderful man though Moses was, he was not the parent of the tribes. He views them, in his blessing (Deut. 33), not in their crookedness, or their wickedness according to the flesh, but as having the Holy Spirit.

In no sense, in a way, are parents more encouraged than when their children get the Holy Spirit. We are then entitled to look at them in a new light, not only as our offspring, but as saints, as part of the house of God. The parent regards them then as a man of God. A man of God, as such, thinks of God, of the house of God. Moses in blessing the tribes views them as a man of God. He has no complaint to make, no reproof; the tribes are viewed as possessed typically of the Spirit, whereas Jacob is the parent. "Hearken," says he, "unto Israel your father." (Gen. 49. 2.)

The father knows the child best. So Jacob begins with Reuben, and then he speaks of Simeon, and then of Levi—not a good word. Let parents beware of hiding the crookedness of the flesh, of deceiving

themselves as well as their children, and interfering with the operations of the Spirit of God, for, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John 3. 6.) You cannot alter it. Do not attempt to hide it or to palliate it, or minister to it, for in so doing you but interfere with the work of the Spirit. Jacob made no attempt, in speaking to his sons, to hide their guilt. No one knew it better than he, and he exposed it to them. Nevertheless *every one of the tribes was blessed*. This should be an immense encouragement to us. Jacob had faith in God. And so the parent has an example, in the man of faith, not to attempt to palliate or hide or encourage the flesh in their offspring. God is not doing it. Your children are no better than others; they are born after the flesh. Whatever you may think about them, however delightful they may appear to you, they need to be born again, as the Lord said to Nicodemus. (John 3.)

Those who in Nazareth marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of the Lord's mouth, did so only for the moment, and the next moment "led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." (Luke 4. 29.) Such is the flesh! Hence He did not commit Himself to them. (John 2.) But "there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3. 1, 2.) He had light in his soul, beloved. And the Lord says to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." (John 3. 7.) What a word that was! "The teacher of Israel" is faced with this cardinal truth; a truth

which is denied and rejected all around us. The Lord faces him with it at once. And so I would say to the best behaved, the best trained, the most obedient children in this company, "Ye must be born again." It is imperative. That nature you have which seems, no doubt, so affable may, unless you are born again, some day turn traitor to Christ. As soon as the restraint is removed, that heart of yours is capable of driving a nail into the hand of Christ.

Then the Lord further says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3. 8.) Were that not true the Lord's announcement would be cold comfort. But the wonderful fact is that the wind was blowing, and it was blowing where it listed. God was acting sovereignly, and He is doing so now. He is working here to-day. My word would be ineffective if God were not working by the Spirit ; as the word is, "My Spirit remaineth among you." (Hag. 2. 5.)

When the wind blows and it strikes you, you are brought down. You discover that in you, that is in your flesh, no good dwells. Those of us who look on know something of that. We thank God you are different from what you were. You are not so haughty, so proud, so self-satisfied ; you are miserable. Thank God for that misery if it exists in any one of you. You realise you are unfit for God, that you need forgiveness. The gospel is for you ; indeed, it is the blessed mind of God for you. It tells you about Christ ; about His work on the cross ; about forgiveness ; about the gift of the Spirit. It tells you of Christ risen, and that God has made Him both Lord and

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Christ. Such light is what your soul needs, and what your soul embraces gladly if you are born again.

So God says here, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed." (Isa. 44. 3.) I have been anticipating. If God pours out His Spirit upon you, it is more than new birth. You do not get the Spirit in new birth; you get a certain work of the Spirit. The Spirit comes from heaven as a gift from God to those who believe in Christ risen and who obey Him. The blood was first applied to the right ear, thumb, and toe, and then the oil. (Lev. 14.) Think of the wonderful gift of the Spirit of God. God promises it here; He says, "I will pour my Spirit *upon thy seed*." Parents can count on that. I need not say that this blessing is not limited to the seed of Christians. If there are those who have unconverted parents, the same offer is for you. God proposes to give His Spirit to you also, on the ground of faith in Christ. As Peter said, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you . . . for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2. 38.) So that the proposal is for all; but I particularly refer to young ones. God proposes to pour His Spirit upon you. Are you prepared for it?

J. T.

(To be continued.)

THE CROSS IN GALATIANS.

No. 2.

THE LEGAL SYSTEM.

THE legal system is comprehended in two words, "cutting off," and to preach circumcision or to merely cut off what is outwardly offensive in the conduct of man but leave the branch and root of what

is passable amongst men, is in principle undoing "the offence of the cross." (Gal. 5. 11.) At the cross God has cut man off, root, branch and fruit, and if I retain any part, I am not in accord with God's judgment executed at Calvary. To retain the man but improve his manners and make a fair shew in the flesh is all to avoid the offence of the cross and the persecution which may flow from it, great or small. (Chap. 6. 12.)

Again, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Chap. 3. 13.) What the tree was to a Jew, a place of shame and ignominy, the CROSS was to a Roman. Now the truth is this, "They that are of the Christ [a most remarkable expression] have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts." (Chap. 5. 24, New Trans.) If by divine teaching I have learnt the truth from the divine side, namely, that my life is bound up with ANOTHER MAN, the practical and experimental results will follow and shew themselves characteristically in me.

The legal system also takes another very subtle form, namely, that of making a demand on others. Its constitution morally is to make a demand but give no supply. To be expecting a certain conduct from others, whether on the line of righteousness or love, is to be under the legal system. Christianity is a living system of supply, and to expect and demand but not supply is to go back to law. In Romans 12. 10 (New Trans.) we are told, "As to brotherly love, kindly affectioned towards one another : as to honour, each *taking the lead* in paying it to the other." Taking the lead is the holy liberty

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of Christianity, divine love and not the bondage of the legal system.

THE WORLD SYSTEM.

The world system is built up on the principle of lust, God's world is built on love. How different ! It was the world system of man that crucified Christ. How then can I go on with it ? Do I want to go on with it ? If so, affection for Christ has waned. How much better to be able to say as Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world [by *whom*, not by which ; Paul did not separate the cross from the Person who was on it] is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6. 14.) Paul having weighed up the world system in the balances of the sanctuary in the light of that affection which would endure the cross and despise the shame, now morally takes that world and puts it on a cross as having no place in the divine system of holy affections into which pure grace had introduced him.

This being an accomplished, practical fact, the world taking note of it by what his associations are and spheres of interest (so different hitherto), morally do the same for him, and put him on a cross as having no place in their system. The world of divine affections, into which grace had brought him, was governed by love, which always shews itself by the Spirit of Him who formed and framed its moral principles by always going down (Phil. 2. 6-8), Himself the perfect Model ; but the world of sinful passion which crucified Christ, controlled by its adverse principle, LUST, he would leave it in this telling manner by crucifying it in his affections and associations. Have we done so ?

Furthermore, new creation (Gal. 6. 15, New Trans.) lies on the other side of the cross and we reach it when we experimentally glory in it, whose rule brings peace and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Brethren, let us face these things prayerfully with God, and practically with our brethren, that this portion may be ours for His name's sake.

"To us Thy cross is life and health ;
'Twas shame and death to Thee ;
Our present glory, joy and wealth,
Our everlasting stay."

F. G. W.

SECRET DIFFICULTIES.

(2) EVIL THOUGHTS.

OWING to their very nature, evil thoughts are kept secret and often occasion great distress of soul.

Jesus said, "Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts." The prophet said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked [incurable] : who can know it ? " The Apostle Paul wrote, "Evil is present with me . . . O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? "

Satan would suggest that you never could have been converted at all or such thoughts would never arise, and thus would he harass and seek to cause doubt and unbelief.

The truth is that "sin in the flesh," our evil nature, is not improved when we are converted. The believer in Jesus can truly say, God has forgiven all my sins ; but then has to learn that the flesh is still the flesh

and unchanged. Scripture never speaks of "sin in the flesh" being forgiven. It says, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, CONDEMNED sin in the flesh." Thus God judged it unsparingly at the cross. We are called upon to reckon with God and judge it with all its fruits unsparingly too. Deliverance is known when the soul turns in faith to the risen and glorified Christ, and the heart triumphantly cries, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Though the flesh is still in us that is no reason why it should be allowed to act. Although evil thoughts arise, they are not to be encouraged, but, on the contrary, must be judged before God. The believer has the power of the *Holy* Spirit of God to this end.

Practically, we need ever to remember that our minds cannot maintain a void. Thoughts we shall have, good or evil, pure or impure. Hence the import of the exhortation, "Whatsoever things are true . . . honest . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report . . . THINK ON THESE THINGS." Also the word to Timothy, "Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them." "Refuse the evil and choose the good." We can decline to allow our minds to travel on the line of what is evil, and we can occupy them with that which is good. Read what is pure. Refuse to listen to what is not pure. Speak what is pure. "Keep thyself pure."

It must and will be a continuous conflict. We are in a corrupt world which is constantly making its appeal to every element of the flesh within.

But there is power for overcoming, for we have the grace of Christ, the support of the Spirit of God, the cleansing effect of the word of God, and the whole-

some atmosphere of the company of the people of God to preserve us.

We may well pray, "Let the words of my mouth, and the *meditation of my heart*, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer."

F. S. M.

JOY.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that *my* joy might remain in you, and *your* joy might be full." (John 15. 11.)

"Rejoice in the Lord alway." (Phil. 4. 4.)

"Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable." (1 Peter 1. 8.)

○ LORD, it is our joy to know
 Thy love supreme while here below,
 As soon in heaven above.
 To gaze upon Thy hands and side,
 And ever near Thee, Lord, abide,
 Fruit of Thy heart's deep love.

The Father's secret pleasure known,
 Thou fillest now His glorious throne,
 Head o'er creation wide,
 Soon shall the earth with praises ring,
 Thy glory fill each living thing,
Thy glory, Lord, who died.

To us e'en now the Spirit brings
 Thy glory nigh—the pilgrim sings,
 Indwelt by love divine.
 Thy love in all its depth and height,
 Its length and breadth and presence bright,
 Around our hearts entwine.

From Thy redeemed saints, O Lord,
 Praise be to Thee, with one accord,
 From all on earth below.
 Soon hearts responsive to Thy love,
 Shall fill the Father's house above,
 And all love's fulness know.

EVENING AND MORNING.

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For ever then to gaze on Thee,
Thy presence feel, Thy glory see,
The Father's lovèd One.
Our ears shall hear Thy blessed voice,
Our hearts shall in Thee, Lord, rejoice,
Whose love our hearts has won.

T. E.

EVENING AND MORNING.

(ECCLES. 11. 7-10; 12. 1, 2, NEW TRANS.)

“**N**OW the light is sweet, and pleasant is it to the eyes to see the sun; but if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many: all that cometh is vanity.”

“Rejoice, young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Then remove discontent from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; for childhood and youth are vanity. And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, of which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, be darkened, and the clouds return after the rain.”

Man reckons morning and evening. He knows the evil days will arrive (conscience is with him) in the which he will find no pleasure, and so every effort is made to extend the evening, that his time for immediate pleasure may not be curtailed, and the clock is set back and he is deluded that he has gained an hour, but, notwithstanding, the evil days draw nigh, *the evening*, and come it must. “The windows

are darkened . . . for man goeth to his age-long home, and the mourners go about the streets," his evening has closed in ; sad, sad indeed the life that has no morning in view. God reckons evening and morning, and His thought is to bring all to the light of the morning. (Gen. 1. 3.) "Let there be light : and there was light" is the divine command. "And the evening and the morning were the first day." (Gen. 1. 5.) This, be it noted, before the sun and the moon were created. So it is evident that the Spirit of God has moral thoughts in view in evening and morning ; and while for man his evening comes and closes up all his pursuits and pleasures, the thought of the divine mind is to bring all to the light of the morning, namely, the day. And *this* morning the coming of Jesus has brought in, as it is said in 2 Samuel 23. 4 by David prophetically : "*He* shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds." It was the light of the morning that the Apostle Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 4. 6 : "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness [refer Gen. 1. 3], hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," the same One of whom David spake in 2 Samuel 23.

The believer in Jesus has come to that light (the light of the morning), that which shines now in the face of Jesus Christ, and will come out in glorious display in the heavenly city. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof . . . for there shall be no night there." (Rev. 21. 23-25.) Happy indeed the journey here for those who have the morning in view, and whose

affections are abiding in Him who is the light of the morning.

A. E. C.

BIBLE STUDY AND LENA'S LETTER.

SUBJECT: GOD'S COVENANTS.

In order to understand the greatness and uniqueness of God's covenants, I think it would help to contrast them with what we read of man's covenants in scripture.

The terms of a covenant between man and man or nation and nation are considered and agreed to by *both* parties and ratified in some way in the presence of witnesses. Compare Genesis 23. 16, when Abraham bought the field "in the audience of the sons of Heth"—witnesses. Also Genesis 31. 46, the covenant between Jacob and Laban, "they did *eat* there upon the heap," etc. And Joshua 9. 14, 15, when the Gibeonites deceived the heads of Israel, "the men took of their victuals, and . . . sware unto them."

We also read in 2 Chronicles 13. 5 of a covenant of salt. These forms of making a covenant are still regarded in the East. Read also Nehemiah 9. 36-38 and 10. 1.

The covenants made by God are totally different; He makes them with man without consulting man. Read Genesis 9. 8-17 carefully. God's beautiful *unconditional* promise to Noah, the token of which is still visible to-day in God's faithfulness. Then He made three unconditional covenants with Abraham which well repays considering—

- (1) With regard to his natural descendants. (Gen. 15. 4-6.)
- (2) With regard to his seed—Christ. (Gen. 22. 15-18.)
- (3) The covenant of circumcision. (Gen. 17. 10-14, Acts 7. 8, and Rom. 4. 11, where it is called "*a seal of the righteousness*" of his faith.)

God's covenant with Israel at Sinai, however, *was* conditional. Deuteronomy 27. 28 shews that if they kept the law they were blessed, but if disobedient they were cursed. Total failure to keep their side of the covenant is the known result.

In connection with these covenants, read Galatians 3. 16, 17 and 29, where the apostle shews that the unconditional promise made to Abraham *could* not be affected by the law given four hundred and thirty years later—and can call Gentile believers (ourselves) "Abraham's seed" and "heirs according to *promise*."

The New Covenant is the unconditional promise God says He will make with the houses of Judah and Israel in a later day. Read Jeremiah 31. 31-34, etc. The foundation of this wonderful covenant was laid by Christ at the cross. The Lord spoke of His blood as the blood of the new covenant. (Matt. 26. 28; see also 1 Cor. 11. 25.) (The word testament is the same as covenant in scripture, except one place in Hebrews where the will of a man is referred to.)

The Lord is spoken of, too, as the *Mediator* of the new covenant. (See Heb. 9. 15 and 12. 24.)

All this shews that, although the making of this covenant with Israel is still future, the principle upon which God acts with His people is the same—that of sovereign grace—all the blessing being secured through the Mediator Christ Jesus.

In 2 Corinthians 3. 6 Paul speaks of himself and others as “able ministers of the new covenant.” I like to think that our old compilers may have understood something of these truths when they named the two sections of the Bible—Old and New Testament.

Write an essay on our subject.

[*Replies to be sent to “LENA,” Grasmere, Burgess Hill, Sussex.*]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I am very pleased with your essays this month—so many of you have got first class, and I hope it means that you have all enjoyed the study and have gained a little spiritual help by it.

If we have the joy of knowing we are God’s children I think it is good for us to realise the *beginnings* of His dealings with us, and consider a little the *sovereign grace* that gave us our first desires after Himself.

But for this we should still be strangers to His love, going on with the course of things in this world which is heading up for judgment. Instead we can thank and praise Him for His sovereignty, grace and love, that has lifted us out of this condition of things and claimed us for His glory.

The holiday month has come round again, so I am just hoping you are all getting some welcome relaxation from the usual daily occupation, or have it in view in the near future.

Yours affectionately,

LENA.

List of Replies for July.

SUBJECT: NEW BIRTH AND THE NEW MAN.

Class 1.—Cissy Allison, Bessie Bearne, Mary Brown, Elsie Buckley, Grace Eayrs,* Robert Ireland, Dorothy Moorhouse,* Ruth Musson*, Eunice Palmer, George Palmer,* Freda Parker,* Grace Pye, Grace Railton,* Nellie Railton,* Mary Railton,* Irene Rusling,* Ethel Schneider,* Edna Storey,* Kathleen Suckling, Eleanor Tedbury, Albert Tipler,* Mildred Watson*, Charles Wallace, C. Warner.

Class 2.—Dorothy Simmonds.

Late for March.—*Class 1.*—Priscilla, Isabella, and (Australia) Herbert Walker, Florence Merritt.

Late for April.—*Class 2.*—Grace McPhee, Muriel Piesse.

Late for June.—*Class 1.*—Winnie Dunham.*

THE MAN OF GOD.

(2 TIM. 3.)

IN this chapter a sharp contrast is drawn between men and the man of God. It becomes increasingly apparent that we are in the last days of which the apostle speaks, days marked by perilous times when men are "lovers of their own selves"—"lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"—the exhortation is, "From such turn away." The turning away is one of the marks of a man of God.

It will be noticed that in the terrible list of things which will mark men prior to the Lord's return, lovers of their own selves heads the list, indicating a character of behaviour when men will have no regard for any but themselves. How contrary is the spirit to be found in the christian company, as it says in 1 John 3. 16, "Hereby we have known love, because he has laid down his life for us ; and *we* ought for the brethren to lay down our lives." The list reminds one very much of the things spoken of at the end of Romans 1, save that it is the more serious on account of its being covered by a *form* of godliness, but denying the power thereof. There is to be no parleying with such men, but a definite turning away.

Two classes are brought before us so that we may be on our guard as to them. They are the silly women and the magicians. The former are not necessarily women, but those who being without a knowledge of God for themselves do not think for themselves and

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are dominated and led away by those who usurp authority over them. Then there are the magicians, who resist the truth, men of corrupt mind and reprobate concerning the faith. They withstood Moses, seeking to set at nought by imitation the testimony he was giving. They shall proceed no further, it says. Jannes and Jambres came to a full stop when life was brought in. The folly of men to range themselves against God ! Exposure *must* come. For all such the day of exposure is surely coming. We need to be on our watch tower and also to learn that in Christianity everything is set up in the power of life. John in his gospel early brings in the thought of life, and as we are established in the power of life by the Spirit those who seek to set aside the truth by imitation will have no power over us.

In verse 7 it says, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." What a sad state to be in. How different it is with us, for we start with a knowledge of the truth—things that are according to God—and then we move on, ever learning its wonderful power of fulness. As the Apostle Paul says in writing to the Galatians, "Christ has set us free in freedom ; stand fast therefore, and be not held again in a yoke of bondage."

What is our safeguard ? Is it not Paul's doctrine ? The removal of man after the flesh and the bringing in of a Man of another order altogether in the Person of the Son of God and in connection with Him the introduction of a sphere of holy affections and relationships.

J. R. T.

THE GOSPEL AS FOR THE HOUSEHOLD.

GOSPEL ADDRESS.

(Continued.)

AND then, as you will observe, He says, "They shall spring up as among the grass." (Isa. 44. 4.) After forgiveness and receiving the Spirit of God you begin to *grow*. "They shall spring up." Now, grass in scripture represents the energy of life. We get other pictures of life in the animals, for instance, but grass in the field represents life as it appears among the people of God—the fruit of the Spirit.

In referring to it one desires that God would in these days bring in our households; and if they are to grow, according to this passage, there must be the grass, that is, the evidences of life among the people of God. God would afford in the grass what is, as it were, attractive for the young. They find something in the meeting and in their households. There is little grass in a household that has not the reading of the word of God and prayer daily. Grass is to appear around them as the evidence of spiritual life. They grow up among that; they spring up instead of seeking their satisfaction in the pleasures of the world and what the world supplies for the young. And the young are being sought after everywhere. The enemy is devising attractions for them. Huge fortunes have been made in the world by men and women who provide filthy attractions for the young. We need the grass, dear brethren, as a counter-attraction to save the young. They shall spring up among it, it says, "as willows by the water courses."

Water courses refer to those occasions in which the Holy Ghost has a free hand. The water is *running*.

You see, God would have it thus. If He pours His Spirit in His grace upon the offspring of His people, He also would have among His people the grass and the water courses. Water courses are the life. The young people come into touch with the ministry of the word in the energy of the Spirit in those seasons in which the Holy Spirit is free. They grow up like willows, it says, "willows by the water courses." It is for young people here to know how much this agrees with their experience. And now, as having received the Spirit, you attend the meetings; you enjoy the evidences of life among the people of God, and presently you speak in the language of the next verse: "One shall say, I am the Lord's." (Isa. 44. 5.) *I am* the Lord's; not now your parents only, *you* belong to the Lord.

Let me entreat you young people here to make *confession*. Confess to whom you please: your mother, your father, your brother, or your sister, or any one in whom you have confidence. Make a bold confession; take a stand in your soul, in the language of this verse, "I am the Lord's." You are His indeed; He has bought you. He has rights over your soul: He has given Himself for you. Has each one here said, "I am the Lord's"?

And then further: "Another shall call himself by the name of Jacob." You say, Jacob is not a name I like to be called by. You may prefer to be called Joseph. But if you acknowledge you are the Lord's the next thing is that you accept *responsibility*. One of the most important features of a Christian is to honestly accept obligation. Saul said: "Lord, what wilt thou have *me to do*?" (Acts 9. 6.) He owned that he was the Lord's, and he called himself by the

name of Jacob. He accepted responsibility, and the Lord accepted it. I need not speak of the use he was to the Lord afterwards ; his history is well known. But it is an incentive to accept obligation, for the Lord may use you ; He may give you work to do which the archangel Michael might desire to do. He did with Saul. He gave him work to do which angels might well covet. And so, if you accept obligation, and call yourself by the name of Jacob, God will give you something to do. He will employ you in His service, and instead of criticising others, you will think of doing something yourself.

Sometimes you may hear complaining and grumbling amongst the people of God, and it is very largely due to the fact that some of the Lord's people have not honestly accepted obligation. If you are really honest, you will admit that what you are criticising is better than you can do. Obligation steadies you and sobers you ; it brings you into accord with the Lord Himself. He took all our obligation on Him. It is an immense thing for young Christians to accept obligation.

And, further, "Another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." And well you may, for it is a name which spiritually is covered with glory. It really refers to the Christian as he is seen in the Epistle to the Ephesians, as Jacob designates him as seen in the Epistle to the Romans. In Romans the believer accepts obligation "that the righteous requirement of the law," for instance, "should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to Spirit." (Rom. 8. 4, New Trans.) It is an immense thing, as I said, to accept obligation. It is not such

as you fear, for you have the Spirit ; you walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. When you write down your name you wish it to be recorded permanently. You are not going to discard the name you have written with your hand, which is Israel (figuratively the saints as seen in the Epistle to the Ephesians). I refer to it because it shews us how the gospel leads us on step by step until we reach the divine standard. Israel is the spiritual man. By comparing Genesis 32 and other scriptures in which Jacob and Israel appear we shall see that the former generally represents responsibility and the latter spiritual power and blessing.

There are very few Israels, and one does not omit oneself. Nevertheless, there is the divine standard before us, and the gospel proposes to reach that standard in every one of us. We are to reach it, and subscribe with our hands to the Lord, and call ourselves by the name of Israel. The gospel proposes that we should be brought into the greatest family in the whole universe of God. Nothing less than that is the divine proposal. God gives us not only His Spirit, but He gives us His Spirit as the Spirit of adoption. As it says : "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. 8. 15.) We are brought into the family of God. There are other families. The Father names all the families in heaven and on earth. You do not wish your name recalled. You come to the idea of your ability to belong to the greatest family in the universe. Think, beloved, of subscribing yourself as belonging to the greatest family in the universe. You do not wish that recalled. And now think of the standard

of that family : it is the Son of God. We are to be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He may be the Firstborn among many brethren. Think of the dignity of it ! The gospel proposes nothing less. It proposes this for us—sonship—a family of sons ; those who will be the companions of Christ ! Think of belonging to such a family as that. The more spiritual you are, the more readily you subscribe yourself as belonging to that family by the name of Israel.

May God lead us to the full height of the gospel—the elevation and the power of it—that we may come out here like Christ and like God. We are to come out in our dignity, and like the Apostle Paul, less than the least of all, to minister unto all. That is the divine intent.

J. T.

THE BIBLE—2 CHRONICLES.

THE reign of Solomon, with which the Second Book of Chronicles opens, affords a beautiful type of the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus, as we may learn from Psalm 72. The king's son, as there referred to, is Christ, David's Son and David's Lord.

The Book of Kings, as we saw when we considered that section of scripture, more particularly presents the heavenly side of glory ; and the present place of Christ as sitting on His Father's throne finds a type in that Solomon sat on the throne of his father David. Chronicles gives us the earthly glory of the millennial day, as we speak. Solomon sits on the throne of Jehovah. (1 Chron. 29. 23.) There is also a vail alluded to in 2 Chronicles 3. 14, but not so in Kings, and we may notice also that in Chronicles the cherubim

are looking out, that is, towards the house from the holiest (see New Trans.), suggesting that all on earth is in keeping with God's holy requirements.

One of the great subjects of the book is the direct government of God. The key to the position is found in chapter 16. 9: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." It is interesting to note this in connection with the return of the remnant from Babylon in the days of Ezra. We read in Ezra 5. 5 that "the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews," and the many instances given in Chronicles afford ample proof of the support of God in connection with that which was according to His mind.

My young readers will find great profit in noticing each detail approved of God, and what has been written has been written for our learning.

During the present day of grace God's government is not direct; He is over-ruling rather than directly governing things on earth. 1 Peter 3. 12 shews this. The apostle quotes Psalm 34, which refers to God's government, "His face is against them that do evil"; but Peter carefully omits the expression, "to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." God is not so acting now. He was doing so in the days of the Second Book of Chronicles, however, and He will do so again, as we may see in Revelation 5. 6; but to-day is the day of grace, and His governmental dealings, as I have said, are seen in *over-ruling* things rather than directly governing them.

In connection with this thought of the government of God, it is interesting to notice four great victories, the details of which are given us in 2 Chronicles.

The first one is in the reign of Abijah, and was in relation to that which might suggest religious evil. The battle was between Abijah and Jeroboam. We shall remember that Jeroboam had set up the idols in connection with Israel's departure. Abijah's appeal before the battle and his reference to the priests and the service of God, and finally in 2 Chronicles 13. 10-12 that the Lord their God was with them, all shew us this.

Many young believers are assailed by the enemy in relation to spiritual things. His servants assume the character of ministers of righteousness. Anti-christian teaching is abundant to-day, and the babes in 1 John 2 are specially warned against that kind of evil. Our remedy is in the truth ; knowing the truth. (1 John 2. 21.) The maintenance of what is right and our links of communion with the Lord are the best weapons to enable us to gain the victory over this kind of evil.

The next case is that in the reign of Asa, and was a victory over what is suggestive of that which is merely of man. The Ethiopians were the enemies in this instance, and they illustrate man in his natural state of darkness as a fallen creature. Therefore in his prayer Asa says, "Let not *man* prevail against thee" (2 Chron. 14. 11) ; an army of a million men was no small thing in those days. The Corinthians were in great danger of being vanquished by what was of natural man. They were in danger of giving that which is merely human a place in God's assembly. Good speakers, and people of good position in this life, were being given a place, and the apostle has to rebuke them on this line. (1 Cor. 2.) God can very simply settle the question of an army of a million men if we rely on Him. This is the test. There must

be confidence in God and not in what we are naturally. The imposing features of human ability are very apt to become dangerous to us ; but weakness is power if we are dependent on God. Bodily presence weak and speech contemptible were what marked the apostle at Corinth, a seat of human pretension.

The third victory was over Moab and Ammon in the days of Jehoshaphat. This is full of interest because Jehoshaphat was more than once marked by unequal associations, that is, associating himself with what was evil, for he himself was godly. We shall remember that Moab and Ammon were descendants of Lot, and in the days of Israel's journey to the land of Canaan, Moab proved a great hindrance to God's people through their wiles and unholy associations. The peculiar feature in this victory is Jehoshaphat's action in placing the singers in the front of his army, that they should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army. Moab and Ammon typify those who are related to us by natural ties, but who are not in the path of obedience to God's will, the true place of God's people. A very clear rebuke to all such is the clear evidence that we can sing ; our hearts are happy. We are proof against their wiles and allurements, for our hearts are full. The more definitely we are for the Lord, the more happy are our hearts ; and the more we give God His place in grateful outgoings of praise, the more complete shall our victory be over all such enemies. The singers are the victors.

The victory in Hezekiah's day was over Assyria. Assyria typifies that which relates to circumstances. God may use circumstances as discipline to us ; the enemy will endeavour to use them to distress and over-

come us. In a future day Assyria will be a blessing, because every circumstance will be contributive to the well-being of God's people. We read that Egypt and Assyria and Israel are blessed. (Isa. 19. 23.) Egypt typifies the world of natural resource ; Assyria is a type of the world viewed in the light of the circumstances of life. If we seek to avoid the pressure of circumstances by turning to the natural resources of the world, it is like people going to Egypt to be protected from Assyria. (Isa. 31.) The path of victory is to recognise that God can quite easily settle such matters. God permits them to destroy each other ! If we were more confident in God, we should have much more peace of mind as to circumstances. The question is, who is greater, God or the enemy who may be seeking to overcome us by pressure of circumstances ? A sparrow is of interest to our Father, how much more so are we.

Illustrating the same principle of God's government, some cases may be cited which are given us in 2 Chronicles in which God's disapproval is clearly seen. After twenty years of peace Asa is tested and fails. He had very distinct support in connection with the victory over the Ethiopians, and God had further encouraged him through his prophet Azariah. But prosperity and peace are apt to make our hearts forgetful of God, and Asa fails in the very thing in which he had had such remarkable support. He turns to man and not to God ; and in his further discipline, for he became diseased in his feet, he turns to the physicians and not to God. (Chap. 16. 9-12.)

Jehoshaphat also fails, and under God's government his posterity suffers very severely. His affinity with Ahab and Ahab's son was full of danger. He

almost lost his own life once (chap. 18. 32), and it was only God's mercy that saved him. God also had to discipline him as to his ships. (Chap. 20. 35-37.)

Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, married Ahab's daughter, probably through his father's friendly links with Ahab; and hence Jehoram's children came under God's governmental dealings with Ahab, and Jehoram himself dies under God's direct judgment. (Chap. 21.) And not only this, but the next generation, Ahaziah's children, are all, save one, killed by Athaliah. The babe Joash was saved in God's mercy. Just think of Jehoshaphat's son, his grandson, and all save one of the next generation falling under the government of God through Jehoshaphat's thoughtless and wrong step of alliance with Ahab.

An interesting illustration of the way in which the government of God serves His ways of mercy is seen in the last chapter. (Ver. 22.) To fulfil Jeremiah's prophecy God stirs up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, to make a proclamation and liberate His people and once again build the house of the Lord. Great nations may war, whole countries may be devastated by man in his lust for glory, but God is over it all, and in His own time and way fulfils His promises: "Hath he said and shall he not do it?" M. W. B.

SECRET DIFFICULTIES.

3. PERSONAL TRIALS.

HOW true is the word, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." There are secret personal trials which are very bitter, yet which cannot be shared.

Many a person carrying such a sorrow has been seriously misunderstood and this has added to the burden. There are cases of bereavement of a peculiar character, conscious personal defects, the slight of a dear friend, or it may be the constant trial of a life of loneliness, besides the innumerable secret sorrows of the human heart.

It is a great cheer to know that all these things open a wonderful door to the activities of the grace of Christ—the great High Priest of His people. “In that he himself hath suffered being tempted [tried], HE IS ABLE to succour them that are tempted [tried].”

So that we can say, “We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was *in all points* tempted [tried] like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

The Apostle Paul had a secret trial—a thorn for the flesh—the messenger of Satan to buffet him, which he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him. The Lord said to him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” What a marvellous result this message had! for he said, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

Thus would the Lord Jesus encourage the burdened heart, that if no one in the whole world can share its trial, He is able to lift the heart above it. He says, “Come unto ME, all ye that . . . are *heavy laden*, and I will give you rest.” There are heavy-laden believers as well as sinners, and His invitation comes to each with equal force.

Thus the secret trial gives a unique opportunity of gaining the experience of the Lord's personal touch of sympathy and grace if we but come boldly to Him.

While we nurse our trial and brood over it, keeping it as a secret from Him, we shall not only keep our burden, but it will grow heavier. We may be encouraged to tell Him all, for

“ He knows what sorest trials mean,
For He has felt the same.”

Even if the sorrow is the direct consequence of one's own folly and sin, this is no barrier, providing the sin is owned and judged. “He is able also to save them *to the uttermost* that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Thus the great yet simple solution of our secret trials will be found only in the presence of Jesus—the Son of God—our great High Priest. We need not hesitate to pour into His sympathetic ear even that which cannot be told to any person on earth. May each learn His ability and His heart to meet every secret trial, and thus gain a deeper secret and personal knowledge of Himself and His love through the sorrow.

F. S. M.

A PRAYER SONG.

WHY should I crave for pleasures
In this poor world of sin,
When to God's boundless treasures
I soon shall enter in ?

Why should earth's idols hold me,
Or captivate my heart,
When, Lord, by faith I've seen Thee
In glory where Thou art ?

LINES FROM AN INVALID'S NOTE BOOK. 195

Why should the world's ambition
 Rage in this heart of mine,
 When right to give position
 Should, Lord, be only Thine ?

Should I by lust be driven,
 Even for what is good ?
 Surely my God has given
 All that He wisely could.

* * * * *

Nay, then in Thy sweet favour
 My favour I would find,
 And where Thou sittest, Saviour,
 By grace I'd set my mind.

So may no earthly object
 An idol prove to me ;
 But may my heart be subject
 Entirely, Lord, to Thee.

Be my ambition solely
 To do the will of God,
 And follow Jesus wholly
 In the blest path He trod.

Until in glory dwelling
 In God's eternal rest,
 His praises ever telling
 In Christ for ever blest.

J. F. MCB

LINES FROM AN INVALID'S NOTE BOOK.

I SEEM to have been in a tunnel lately ; worse in health, I have felt so discouraged, as if I could not face all my limitations, though they face me at every turn. Then one night after a specially dreary day I slept and dreamt, and in my dream I seemed to be saying to myself, "I am always out of everything." Thing after thing passed before me that

I longed to do or to be, and people I had wanted to help, and so on, but either some one else was doing these things or they were being left undone. *I* had no part either in the done or the undone things ; a sort of despair came over me as I thought not only of the present but of the future, for I said to myself, "I am not in anything now, nor can I ever be again." Then in my dream, just as my depression had reached its height, a still small voice said quite distinctly, "But you are *in Christ*, what does it matter what else you are in ? " I woke up thinking, "I am in Christ, and everything worth having is in Him."

It was a vivid dream, and it helped me greatly, especially the thought that God, as it were, should stoop right from heaven to speak to me at the critical moment when Despair had me in his grip. That "still small voice" had immediate effect. Despair had to let go his hold ; ministering angels came instead, and the Holy Ghost brought many things to my remembrance, telling me more about this wonderful place in Christ, the altogether lovely One.

"*In him* are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "*In him* dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ; and ye are complete *in him*." (Col. 2. 3, 9, 10.)

Then I recollected something a very dear brother said to me, not long ago, after my having spoken of being unable to help or serve others now.

He said : "But you can serve those you live with, even if you say nothing ; for what you are is far more important than what you do or say. If you are in spirit near the Lord, abiding in Him, your very presence will be a help. It is all a question of knowing Him. You must really know Him better than any

THE MOON AND ITS LESSONS.

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earthly friend, for He is in you and you in Him. What *could* be more intimate ? ”

This is a fact, never mind whether you *feel* near, just believe it and go to Him, as to your nearest and dearest friend, being quite confident that He loves you far better than any one, and glad to think that He knows you through and through. (See Psa. 139. 1, 2.)

Feed on the thought that He is in you and you *in Him*, and the truth and comfort of it will fill your heart.

“If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God.” (2 Cor. 5. 17.)

THE MOON AND ITS LESSONS.

THE moon, as is well known, reflects the light of the sun, and in scripture is a figure of the church shining in the light of Christ, and giving light in the world during the dark night of His absence (Gen. 1. 16) before the day dawns when the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in His wings. (Mal. 4. 2.) It is a well-established astronomical fact that, owing to the moon rotating on its axis in exactly the same time it takes to revolve round the earth, we only see one side of the moon, and that the bright side on which the sun shines. Would not God convey to us a lesson by this unique fact that He would have us always occupied with the bright side of our fellow-Christians, looking at them as they are in the light of Christ ? Occasionally the moon is eclipsed by the earth coming between it and the sun, and sometimes

what is of the earth obscures the shining of a saint, and it is our responsibility (Matt. 18. 15; Lev. 9. 7) to seek to remove it, so that like the eclipse it may be only temporary.

Some think lightly of the works of God in creation, taking them as mere physical facts having no moral significance, but the inspired Psalmist has written, "I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers" (Psa. 8. 3), and again, "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up." (Psa. 8. 5.) Job 37, speaking even of thunder, says, "Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven." Listening attentively to thunder would make us feel how great God is and how small we are.

T. F. C.

PRAYER.

THE importance of prayer cannot be exaggerated. It is an evidence of dependence upon God. The apostle in the epistle of christian experience exhorts us to "be careful for nothing; but in *everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." In the present condition of things prevailing on every hand what a great privilege it is to turn to God and pray for all men, knowing He would have *all* men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. Our Lord Himself, as the Gospel of Luke shews, was a Man who spent much time in prayer, and how comforting is the thought that He has prayed for us, not that we should be *taken out of the*

world, but that we should be *kept from the evil*. Then there is the privilege that the Lord Jesus speaks of—of praying for one another and of what Jude calls praying in the Holy Ghost.

J. R. T.

BIBLE STUDY AND LENA'S LETTER.

SUBJECT : CIRCUMCISION.

Last month we just referred to circumcision as the token of God's covenant to Abraham and his descendants, and I think it will be interesting and profitable if we study it more in detail and see how the principle it involved applies to us now.

Genesis 17. 9-14 gives us the institution of the rite of circumcision. God entered into a covenant with Abraham and his seed, "*I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,*" and this is in connection with their promised possession of the inheritance.

This was God's side, and in His faithfulness He could not withdraw what He had committed Himself to. But then there was man's side. Abraham and all the males in his household were to be circumcised, and all his seed after him, "My covenant shall be *in your flesh* for an everlasting covenant." (Ver. 13.) That made it an intensely personal matter. Abraham's seed were to be a people definitely separated from the world to God, and there was to be a distinctive mark of this separation in their own person.

God expects this to be true too of His separated heavenly people. From Romans 2. 28, 29 we learn that circumcision is an *inward* thing and takes place in heart and spirit. (Look out also Old Testament scriptures.) It is a figure of *the complete setting aside of the flesh* which cannot please God.

But how can we do this? We may desire it, but where is the power to accomplish our desire? I think Romans 4. 11 will help us in this. It tells us that Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a "*seal of the righteousness of faith.*" Surely for us this *seal* is the gift of the Spirit as the divine power by which we can set aside the flesh.

God said to Abraham in Genesis 17. 1, "I am *the Almighty God,*" and the Spirit puts the power of the Almighty God at our disposal. This setting aside of the flesh is a very practical thing and is the only witness to the world that we are a separated people. God cannot countenance the flesh, therefore He desires His people to individually refuse it too.

Colossians 2. 9 presents Christ in all His fulness and believers as complete in Him, and then adds "In whom also ye have been *circumcised* . . . in the putting off of the body of the flesh," etc. This mentions circumcision in connection with Christ. We can afford to have no confidence in the flesh when we realise that the fulness of the Godhead resides in Christ and we are filled up in Him.

1. Circumcision was instituted in connection with the inheritance. (See Gen. 17. 7-10.)
 2. A circumcised people left Egypt. (Josh. 5. 2-9.)
 3. During the forty years wandering in the wilderness the rite was not performed.
 4. All were circumcised at Gilgal before possessing the land. (Read Josh. 5. 2-9.)
- Link these facts together and write your own thoughts about them.

[Replies to be sent to "LENA," Grasmere, Burgess Hill, Sussex.]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I cannot tell you how much I have enjoyed reading your papers on "New Creation," they are all so good. It has been a real encouragement to me that you manifest such a clear comprehension of this wondrous truth, and it is evident that some of the essay-writers have enjoyed in their own souls gleams of "the new creation's stainless joy" that have called forth praise.

I know this is what the Lord desires, and what a power, too, it brings into our lives—the sense of ourselves as having part in God's new creation. What a day that will be when not only in purpose but in actuality God's words will be put into effect: "*Behold, I make all things new.*"

I am equally satisfied with the papers from abroad, and want our dear friends at a distance from us (as to mileage *only*) to feel encouraged in the searching too.

Many thanks for little notes sometimes attached to your papers. They are appreciated, although I have not always time to reply.

Yours affectionately,

LENA.

List of Replies for August.

SUBJECT: NEW CREATION.

Class 1.—Cissy Allison, Mary Brown,* Elsie Buckley,* Grace Eayrs, Robert Ireland, Ruth Musson,* George Palmer,* Grace Pye,* Grace Railton,* Mary Railton,* Nellie Railton,* Ethel Schneider, Edna Storey, Albert Tipler,* Charles Wallace, Chris Warner, Mildred Watson.

Class 2.—Dorothy Simmonds.

Late for July.—*Class 1.*—Winnie Dunham,* Robert Phillips* (N. Y.).

Late for June.—*Class 1.*—Robert Phillips.

Late for May.—*Class 1.*—Florence Merritt (N. Z.). *Class 2.*—Grace McPhee, Muriel Piesse (Australia).

Late for April.—*Class 1.*—Priscilla Walker,* Isabella Walker (Australia). *Class 2.*—Herbert Walker (Australia).

THE MAN OF GOD.

(2 TIM. 3. 10-17.)

WE have already noticed the things from which the man of God is exhorted to turn away. In the verses quoted at the head of this paper we have things to be followed with purpose of heart. The instruction is that of a man of God to a man of God, and it comes down to us in order that we may come out as men of God.

What a wonderful verse is the tenth, and how greatly privileged Timothy was to have been thoroughly acquainted with the things mentioned. He had been much in the company of Paul, knew his doctrine or teaching and had observed that the manner of life of the apostle tallied with the doctrine he taught. How *we* should covet that this might be true, and increasingly true of us. Then his purpose; God delights to put honour upon men of purpose in connection with His things. Faith; all men have not faith, but faith as to the whole realm of unseen realities marked the apostle in a pre-eminent degree. Longsuffering, love and endurance; all these virtues Timothy had observed. Persecutions and sufferings, how they marked the apostle during his wonderful years of service. He particularly mentions three places as testimony that in the service of the Lord the pathway did not get easier. If we turn to Acts 13. 45-50 we see that he was expelled from Antioch, and in the next chapter at Iconium the people wished to stone him, and at Lystra he was stoned and drawn

out of the city, thinking he was dead. Things went from bad to worse for the great vessel of the testimony, but the Lord's faithfulness to His servant shines in the words, "but out of them all the Lord delivered me."

How reassuring this is for Timothy and for us. The One who stood by Paul would stand by Timothy and will stand by us as we stand for Him in the midst of persecutions and sufferings, for the word is still true that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." What a recompense to know the delivering grace of the Lord.

Continuance is the test ! continuance in the things of God. Timothy would know that Paul had got that which he taught from God ; he had been an apt learner in the school of God. Now knowing he is about to depart he has a special appeal to the heart of Timothy. "Continue *thou* in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of. knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Timothy had been a learner. Have we ? There is so much that is merely superficial abroad to-day. The things taught by the apostles are ours and we should *learn* them and not let them slip, being fully persuaded as to their truth. How often we have to unlearn and how difficult the process is, but with regard to truth which we may have learned there can be assurance, for truth is unchanging. There is no development there. We may *grow* in the knowledge of it, and thus be brought to recognise its perfection, and knowing of whom we have learned it.

How cheering to the heart it is to meet a man with settled convictions, convictions formed by the truth, and to see him marked by the steadfast continuance in

the things he has learned, knowing of whom he has learned them. God looks for such men to-day. The church of God needs such men in a day of confusion and uncertainty. May it be our exercise and desire to stand for the interests of Christ and thus come out as men of God.

J. R. T.

THE BIBLE.—EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

IT may give us a more distinctive view of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah if we consider them together and view some of their features in contrast one to another.

The captivity of Judah took place in three sections ; the return from captivity was also brought to pass in three parts. The account of the first return we have given us in Ezra 1, the second in Ezra 7, the third in the Book of Nehemiah. The first two had especial reference to the rebuilding of the temple, the last one more particularly related to the building of the city of Jerusalem itself.

The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are very interesting in this day ; for the church has experienced a captivity and restoration analogous to that of Judah. Through unfaithfulness the church came under the influence of worldly principles and dwelt where Satan's throne was. (Rev. 2.) Corruption and confusion followed, and but for a Daniel here and there whom God preserved in individual separation, though publicly sharing the general position, the church as a whole ceased to be a true and separate witness to God in the world. In infinite mercy about a hundred years ago God recovered many of His people from the

corrupt principles of the world and led them to take a path of separation. They could not, however, return to the original condition of the church, but under the ordering of God's government they were enabled to act in the light of what is proper to the whole church, and to enjoy spiritual privileges of that character, waiting for the coming of Christ.

Allowing for the different nature of their blessings, this is what Judah experienced in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. They were granted some little reviving to await a coming Christ.

* * * * *

One point of contrast is especially noticeable between the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. In Ezra the move began with the sovereign action of God through Cyrus; in Nehemiah the return had already begun, and Nehemiah's own faithfulness is prominent. This is in many ways shewn, and noticeably in his inquiry as to the condition of things in Jerusalem and his diligence in the building the wall, etc.

We have already noticed the importance of being able to shew a pedigree when we considered the Book of Chronicles. Ezra emphasises this in chapter 2. 62. The names and numbers are given of those who came up, and we are told that some of the chief of the fathers offered freely for the house of God, and a general statement is made that the people were settled in their cities. This may illustrate how believers in returning from the confusion of the world have the privilege of being grouped together in little local companies. The next point is the altar: this speaks of fellowship. The altar is to be set up on its base. This suggests a return to the proper ground or basis

of fellowship, which is righteousness. (2 Tim. 2. 19–22.) Sacrifice and the service of God follow. (Chap. 3. 3–6.) This brings the enemy against them with proffers of help. We sometimes forget the enemy tries to gain his end that way. (See Acts 16. 17.) Here he failed to achieve his end, and therefore sought it by opposition. (Chap. 4.) From Haggai we learn that the real cause of the work ceasing was that those who had returned became less keen ; and hence when stirred up by Haggai and Zechariah to resume the work, the enemy was quite powerless to prevent them. (Chaps. 5., 6.)

After this Ezra comes up. (Chap. 7.) It is very stimulating to note the sober exercise of Ezra and his waiting three days at the river Ahava (chap. 8 15), and also at Jerusalem. (Ver. 32.) After arriving at Jerusalem Ezra is confronted with the difficulty of unholy associations, which had crept in among God's people. His sitting down with rent garments shews how deeply he felt this sin. Oh ! that we all felt things as Ezra did ! A sense of what Christ is enables us not only to mourn over sin but to *judge* it. (Chap. 9. 4, 5.) At the time of the evening sacrifice Ezra rises up and turns to God about it ; and how solemnly and soberly he deals with it all.

Nehemiah begins with exercise and inquiry. (Chap. 1. 2–4.) His work related to the *city* as Ezra's did to God's *house*. We might link Haggai with Ezra and Zechariah with Nehemiah. The wall of separation is very important. There is no protection secured apart from this. It is interesting to note Nehemiah also waits three days at Jerusalem. (Chap. 2. 11.) I wonder if ever we have had exercises that in any way resemble that of Nehemiah in chapter 2. 12–16. Deep and secret soul exercises are suggested here. Exercises

like these such men as Luther, J.N.D., and a few others go through. They are open to us all ; but few take them up.

The separate little portions of the wall being rebuilt in connection with the different gates illustrate how each little company of two or three believers may contribute to the wall of separation being erected. In some instances the wall was built over against a man's house. Does not this remind us of Acts 16. 15 ? In one case it was "over against his chamber." Some of us are not householders ; but we have a chamber ! Am I individually separate ?

The effect of the building the wall was not fully seen nor properly achieved until the wall became *one*. This shews us that the principles on which we act, whether individually, householdwise, or in local gatherings, have one end in view, namely, the universal fellowship which is protected by separation from evil.

The "gates" are referred to in great detail. Gates suggest administration and activity, that is, the way we judge of things and *do* them. There are ten gates in all. But I must not refer in detail to them to any extent. The first three seem grouped together : sheep gate, fish gate and gate of old wall, suggesting what relates to saints, evangelical work and the recognition of what has long been owned. The next three : valley gate, dung gate and fountain gate, suggest self-judgment, removal of what would be defiling and the consequent support of the Spirit. The water gate, horse gate, and east gate are next. Do they suggest ministry, energy and light ? And then, gate Miphkad might suggest, with the ascent that followed, the "appointed place" which adminis-

tration rightly carried out would make possible for us to enjoy. Ezra gives us one side of our spiritual exercises : building an altar, offering sacrifices and erecting a dwelling-place for God. Nehemiah presents the other view : building the wall, gates, and keeping a feast which was accompanied by dwelling in booths.

The keeping of the feast of tabernacles had not been carried out in this manner since Joshua's day. It may have often been kept before, but not after this sort. The dwelling in booths speaks of the confessions of a pilgrim spirit in an atmosphere of brotherly familiarity. (Chap. 8.)

Ezra had the difficulty of unholy associations in the way of mixed marriages to deal with. Nehemiah had (1) the spirit of slavery or bondage (chap. 5), (2) the presence of an Ammonite in the house of God (chap. 13), (3) the recognition of the sabbath, as well as (4) Ezra's difficulty, mixed marriage and the sad effects that the children could not speak the true language.

We must be always on our guard against the spirit of slavery. We may easily make slaves of our brethren. The spirit that would by our manner demand an apology from another is the spirit of making a slave. Placing people under obligation to us, expecting attentions, being injured because we have not the place we think we should have, being unforgiving, are all signs of a spirit that would make our brother a slave and in bondage to us.

The presence of an Ammonite in God's house illustrates the way we might give what is natural a place in divine things. We might like to hear our human relatives preach or take part, we might be regardful of what some one said on spiritual things because we

esteem them naturally. This is allowing an Ammonite. We must get rid of all that. And do we always have our seasons of rest? Though there is much to do, though trade, as it were, is brisk, do we regard the necessity as well as the holy claim of contemplating Christ? This is the sabbath for us.

And then what a solemn thing not rightly to speak the language of the brethren. I do not mean any particular phraseology; we may well do without that. I think the language proper to saints is to say things rightly about Christ, about God, about the Bible and of everything about which God has spoken—to all speak the same thing. (1 Cor. 1.) M. W. B.

THE MUSINGS OF A YOUNG PILGRIM.

(DEUT. 32. 11; MATT. 11. 28-30.)

WE think of all the sorrow that sin has made down here :
The strife, unrest and warfare; the suffering, death and fear.
It makes us sad and gloomy, how can we happy be?
Then comes a word from Jesus—"Come ye apart to Me."

Oh, bitter were the waters Thy cross does now make sweet !
Thy path of death and sorrow was trodden by *Thy* feet;
And when *we* feel the pressure and long to be set free,
We hear Thy sweet voice saying—"Ye weary, come to Me."

When Thou dost stir the nest up, the thorns come thro' the down,
We get upset, disheartened, and fret, and fume, and frown.
But fluttering high above us, quite free from earthly things,
The parent eagle stretches her powerful guarding wings.
And swooping down she gathers the ones who could not fly,
Then soaring up so gently she bears them up on high.

Thus often, Lord, we hear Thee—"Come ye, and learn of Me."
But being full of weakness, too tired, perplexed are we,

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

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We cannot rise above it, we have no strength or power,
Our days are but an handbreadth, our glory like a flower !

* * * * *

But Thou art all-sufficient to lift our souls above,
Out of this scene of sorrow, up to Thy home of love.
Our strength is in our weakness, for then we claim Thy grace,
And carried by the Spirit we see now, Lord, Thy face !

April, 1924.

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

POINTS OF AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS AT
DALBEATTIE.

PSALM 22—the *cross* ; Psalm 23—the *crook* ; Psalm
24—the *crown*.

JEHOVAH-ROI.

“The Lord who reveals himself to me,” as He did
in measure to Hagar. The Shepherd who cares for
me. “The”—there is none other. “The *Lord*”—He
is supreme. “The Lord *is*”—a present reality. “The
Lord is *my*”—my own experience. “The Lord is my
shepherd”—who does everything for me. *Yesterday*—
He was “a worm and no man” (Psa. 22) ; for
ever He will be “King of glory” (Psa. 24) ; but
to-day He is “my shepherd.” Alleluia ! What a
Saviour !

JEHOVAH-JIREH.

“I shall not want”—“no want shall turn me back.”
“The Lord will provide.” “My grace is sufficient
for thee,” He whispers ; and I reply : “I have all
and abound.” Yes, the supply is equal to the de-
mand, and there is a blessed overplus of good. The
negative does not leave us without the positive.

JEHOVAH-SHALOM.

“The Lord of peace.” The pastures of tender grass and the waters of quietness satisfy the soul. He went through the troubled waters of judgment (Psa. 22) that He might lead us by the still waters of peace. We not only browse in the green fields of grace, but we lie down in them. We “chew the cud” of a present ministry He ever gives His people. Sheep when they lie down are *satisfied*, and so are we. The still waters suggest the restfulness of His felt presence. Deep waters are quiescent. We cannot *explain* it, but we can *enjoy* it!

JEHOVAH-ROPHECA.

“He restoreth my soul”—“I am the Lord that healeth thee.” This is the immediate effect of nourishment and the peaceful seclusion of His presence. Restoration does not *necessarily* imply that there has been moral departure. We must have our strength renewed, failure or not failure, to tread “the paths of righteousness.” Thus we “mount up with wings as eagles” (worship); “run and are not weary” (service); “walk and are not faint” (our plodding every day round). The last named tests us most, but “the inward man is renewed day by day.”

JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU.

In Jeremiah it is: “*He* shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.” But He puts His own character upon His people; and so the prophet says again: “*She* shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.” John says, “As he is, so are we in this world.” We morally perpetuate Him when we are like Him here. “He leadeth me *in* [not into] the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” There are many paths.

Each day's path varies. Thus we are kept dependent. Yesterday's grace will not do for to-day—dependent every day, and all the way.

JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH.

“The Lord is there.” Yes, now, in this death-shadowed world. (Luke 1. 79.) We should not limit His presence with us to the actual dying hour. Remember there cannot be a *shadow* without a *light*! “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” We cannot say there *is* no evil, but we can say: “*I will fear* no evil.” Observe it is in the future tense. Anticipated trials are the hardest to endure, for we pass through them in spirit, missing the grace given should they really come. If they come—well, “Thou art with me.”

JEHOVAH-SHADDAI.

Both “rod” and “staff” comfort us. The “staff” David used against the lion and the bear (1 Sam. 17. 34–36) suggests *defence*. The rod, or crook, suggests *discipline*. When we go wrong the Shepherd uses His crook and brings us back. So the soul makes her boast in the Lord. The foes may surround, but His name is Jehovah-shaddai. The table is prepared (we get food); the head is anointed (the power of the Spirit overshadows us); yea, the cup runs over. In *confession* a *defiled* cup is *cleansed*; in *prayer* an *empty* cup is *filled*; in *worship* and *testimony* an *overflowing* cup is *enjoyed* and *communicated* to others.

JEHOVAH-NISSI.

“Goodness and mercy” leave their testimony and footprints *behind*, and the Shepherd goes *before*. Thus secured and sufficed we follow under “the Lord as our banner.” Seven times in this psalm is the little

personal "*me*" used. If we cannot speak of these things as a matter of personal experience we merely repeat the psalm by rote. In the first three verses we speak *of* the Lord ; in the last three *to* the Lord. If we speak *of* Him out of the fulness of our affections, we shall not be very long before we speak *to* Him.

S. J. B. C.

THE CROSS IN EPHESIANS.

AS we advance in the Pauline writings, the truth of the cross being rather more of a delivering character than otherwise, fewer moral elements remain to be dealt with by the Holy Spirit. This does not alter the fact that every christian blessing which lies beyond its delivering scope comes to us alone through Him who died the "death of the cross." In Ephesians the cross meets that sinful element in man called PRIDE and SUPERIORITY over one's fellow-man, be it distance between Jew and Gentile or any form of pride which hinders saints from mutually enjoying one another's company. The distance between Jew and Gentile existed on account of their having received from God "the law of commandments contained in ordinances" (a remarkable expression found only in this epistle) as a chosen nation above others in the earth. However, as they failed to recognise the sovereignty of God in it all, they attached importance to themselves, and prided in their superiority over others.

It was this that brought in the enmity. Their separateness from the nations was constantly emphasised in the giving of the ordinances of the law as a nation under trial, but that day being now brought to an end

in the cross, as we noticed in our paper on Galatians (see August number), the gospel comes to both alike, Jew or Gentile. The Jew could say, The cross has ended me, and the Gentile would say, The cross has ended me. What now remains but for the free grace of God to come to both alike in blessing, and where that grace was received the work of God in the soul abstractly, namely, according to divine counsels as seen in chapter 1. 10 to chapter 2. 10, is such that we have been raised up together and made to sit down together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The Jew raised from his platform of privilege and the Gentile from his distance and idolatry, are both by divine grace and power spiritually placed on one common ground of blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Chap. 2. 6.) We are thus privileged as Jew or Gentile to view ourselves in this precious light by divinely accepting this blessed fact, which already exists for divine Persons, although not actually true for us yet, but which a coming day of glory will display.

This forms a spiritual basis in the soul and works for our present enjoyment, and also turns to a testimony for men as composing the house of God viewed in its provisional character, and also making it possible, too, in a practical way for us to sit down together in holy mutuality, having the moral and spiritual features of the ONE NEW MAN upon us. This being a collective thought, the "one new man," what a victory for God where it is known and cherished, all distance having been spiritually removed, which Babel and sin has brought in, and brethren dwelling together in unity. Surely it is the firstfruits of what will come in in a millennial day, as indicated in Psalm 133. Then it will be seen only in Israel, now it is to

be seen in the Israel of God, composed of those called from every nation under heaven. The removal of what caused the distance in Ephesians is attributed to Christ in this epistle, whereas in Colossians it is traced to God Himself, as we may perhaps see later on, if the Lord will. It was in order to reconcile both Jew and Gentile to God in one body by the cross, "having slain the enmity in himself" (marginal note), and came and preached peace HIMSELF to those afar off (Gentiles) and to those nigh (Jews), "for through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Chap. 2. 16-18.)

Before proceeding further with our subject let us consider this statement, "law of commandments contained in ordinances," and seek help from scripture as to its better understanding. This expression doubtless covers more than the ten commandments and would include all those holy regulations which were to govern them in their relation Godward and toward one another, although they be not given at the same time as the commandments themselves. (See Exo. 12. 14-20; Num. 5. 1-4; 15. 37-41; also 1 Sam. 30. 25, etc.) The Jews boasting in these God-given ordinances of holy conduct, which were to be as unchangeable as the ordinances of the heavens (note the expression which often occurs, Exodus 12. 14: "an ordinance for ever"), fostered a spirit of pride and superiority over the Gentiles who had not received them, thus producing the enmity already referred to previously, the intensity of which possibly is little understood by us in our day. Let us see to it that we do not allow any petty differences produced by pride in any one of us (thus making one superior to the other, be it in its most refined or religious form)

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to rob us of that holy mutuality which is proper to us as called by God to such a place of blessing as being blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. These differences have all been levelled at the cross and ruled out in the judgment that took place at Calvary. He has slain the enmity thereby. (Chap. 2. 16.) This great Agag comes to us most delicately in our day, but we must hew him in pieces before the Lord as did Samuel. (1 Sam. 15. 32-34.) It is the only way, for these thoughts of pride must be slain in our own bosoms before the Lord, and then they will not hinder us before the brethren, and we shall be able to enter fully into the joys of God's assembly, and enjoy, too, the wealth of His inheritance. If we fail in this, remember we shall find a source of weakness with us, and we shall be in opposition practically to "the truth of the cross." God grant it may be otherwise, for His name's sake.

F. G. W.

STEWARDSHIP.

(LUKE 16.)

IT is important to see that we are all stewards, every one, and we shall all have to give an account as to what we have done with what God had given to us. He may see fit to give some more and some less, but He has given all something. Revelation 4. 11 reads, "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." How solemn for those who are living for themselves and for their own pleasure! It is spoken of in our chapter (ver. 11) as unrighteous mammon, and the point is as to what we

are doing with what God has put in our hands. In Matthew 25 we read of one who received one talent, and went and hid it in the earth, so that when his Lord came back, he had to upbraid him for his unfaithfulness, and ended by saying, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Ver. 30.)

In our chapter we read of a certain steward who wasted his master's goods, and his lord said, "Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." All of us too must give an account to God. The steward says, "What shall I do?" This is a very important question; may we all ask it! This man had notice to leave, his time was limited; so is ours. We cannot stay in this world for ever. But he says, "I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." He was going to use what he had of his master's goods in view of the future, and his lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely. Not that the way in which he did it was commendable, for he was one of the children of this world (ver. 8), but he lived in the present in view of the future. So the Lord says to His disciples, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye [or rather it, that is, riches] fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

In chapter 15 we read of the young man who wasted his substance in riotous living. This is a picture of all of us before the Lord brought us to Himself. We pleased ourselves, did our own will, and used what God had given us without reference to the Giver. "For thy pleasure they are and were created." But

now, what shall we do? Be wise, and let us use all that God has given us, not for our advancement or ease in this world, but in view of the coming day, so that He may say, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

In Romans 12. 1 the Apostle Paul beseeches the saints to present their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." They had yielded their members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity (chap. 6. 19) in time past, now they are exhorted to present their whole bodies to God.

The Lord goes on to say (Luke 16. 10-12), "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much . . . If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" This is plain; unless we are faithful in things connected with this world given us by the Lord, we cannot expect Him to commit to our trust spiritual and heavenly things.

From verse 19 to 31 we have a terrible picture of one, the rich man, who lived solely for himself. "Clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously *every* day," he lived only for the present, using what God had entrusted to him for himself, enjoying all the good things God had given him apart from the Giver. And the time came when he had to give an account, and like the man who hid his talent in the earth was consigned to a place of weeping and wailing. "In hell he lifted up his eyes." When too late he asked for mercy, and the least of the least of mercies was denied him. He only asked that Lazarus should "dip the *tip* of his finger in water, and cool my tongue." He did not ask for a cup of cold water.

In 1 Corinthians 4. 1-5 Paul speaks of himself and

those with him as “stewards of the mysteries of God” ; not now stewards of the mammon of unrighteousness (everything here is marred by sin, even the heavens are not pure in his sight), but stewards of the mysteries of God. That is, they are hidden from men generally, and only revealed to those who believe, and who are seeking to please Him. Then he adds, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Have we been faithful in things of this life, and have we been faithful in what God has been pleased to give us of heavenly spiritual things and eternal things ?

The Apostle Peter says, “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the *manifold* grace of God.” (1 Peter 4. 10.) God has not, and does not give grudgingly. His grace and gifts are *manifold*, and the Lord’s own words are, “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

No doubt we are all aware that we are justified by faith, but we must also remember that “faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (James 2. 17.) May we all consider as to what we are doing with what the Lord has committed to us as stewards, both temporal and spiritual. “The Lord is at hand ! ”

W. G.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

GOD delights to encourage *all* His children. If we look around how much there is to discourage, but if we look above it is all encouragement. In 1 Samuel 30, when Ziklag had been taken and burned by the Amalekites, we read that “David

was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him . . . David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." How He came in for His beloved servant Paul when all forsook him, so that he could say, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me."

Then again he says, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Paul had proved God and could answer for Him coming in to encourage and provide. Then there is his desire in the end of 1 Thessalonians that "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," followed by the word of encouragement, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." J. R. T.

BIBLE STUDY AND LENA'S LETTER.

SUBJECT: CONSCIENCE.

The word *conscience* literally means "*joint-knowledge*," and seems to agree exactly with what God said of Adam after the fall: "Behold, the man is become *as one of us, to know good and evil*," (Gen. iii. 22.) This knowledge is universal—even the heathen can be "a law unto themselves . . . their conscience also bearing witness," etc. (See Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

The law gave increased light to God's earthly people as to what was right and wrong. Paul said, "I had not had conscience also of lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt *not* lust." (Rom. vii. 7, New Trans.) Christianity, however, brings the conscience into the light of God, so a Christian's conscience should be exercised before God, fully revealed in Christ, and be absolutely subject to the teaching of scripture, else it may become merely zeal without knowledge and may lead one very far astray. Cf. Saul of Tarsus. He could say that he lived in all good conscience before God, and yet he was haling believers to prison thinking he was doing God service. (See John xvi. 2.)

Scripture speaks of—

1. A good conscience. (1 Peter iii. 16.)
2. A conscience void of offence. (Acts xxiv. 16.)
3. A pure conscience. (1 Tim. iii. 9.)

4. A purged conscience. (Heb. ix. 14 ; x. 2.)
5. A weak conscience. (1 Cor. viii. 7.)
6. A defiled conscience. (Titus i. 15.)
7. A seared conscience. (1 Tim. iv. 2.)

Write one page essay on our subject and give definitions of each of the above.

[Replies to be sent to "LENA," "Leahurst," Glebe Avenue,
Enfield, Middlesex.]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I enjoyed studying the scriptures with reference to God's covenants, and I hope you did too.

I feel we do not value sufficiently the part we have now in God's *new covenant*. It is very beautiful, I think, how in Hebrews viii. the new covenant is definitely spoken of with regard to Israel's future blessing. And then in chapter x. the promise is quoted again (vers. 16, 17), introduced by these words, "The Holy Ghost also is a witness to *us*," the conclusion being, "Having *therefore*, brethren, *boldness* to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." This *boldness* is open to us. May we fully avail ourselves of it !

* * * * *

I shall be glad if you will note that I have changed my address. In future please send your replies to—

"LENA,"

"Leahurst," Glebe Avenue, Enfield, Middlesex.

Yours affectionately,

LENA.

List of Replies for September.

GOD'S COVENANTS.

Class 1.—Mary Brown,* Elsie Buckley,* Grace Eayrs,* Robert Ireland, Ruth Masson,* George Palmer,* Grace Railton,* Mary Railton,* Nellie Railton, Irene Rusling, Ethel Schneider,* Edna Storey, Eleanor Tedbury, Albert Tipler,* Charles Wallace, Mildred Watson.*

Class 2.—Bessie Bearne, Freda Watts.

Late for April.—*Class 1.*—Florence Merritt.

Late for May.—*Class 1.*—Priscilla Walker, Isabella Walker.

Class 2.—Herbert Walker.

Late for June.—*Class 1.*—Isabel Mayo, Freda Watts. *Class 2.*—Grace McPhee.

Late for July.—*Class 1.*—Isabel Mayo. *Class 2.*—Freda Watts.

Late for August.—*Class 1.*—Winnie Dunham, Isabel Mayo,* Robert Philips, Irene Rusling, Kathleen Suckling,* Freda Watts. *Class 2.*—Eleanor Tedbury.

N.B.—Kathleen Suckling's and E. Tedbury's papers were sent in time but were unfortunately mislaid.

THE MAN OF GOD

(2 TIM. 3. 15-17.)

THE apostle next reminds Timothy that from a child he had known the holy scriptures. The sacred writings will fit the man of God for every good work and enable him to recognise what he has to stand for in relation to the interests of Christ in a day of departure and in a scene of confusion.

The first thing is that the holy scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The last three words appear to be the key words of 2 Timothy, and they occur seven times in the epistle, this being the last. How we need to read and to receive scripture on the principle of faith which is in Christ Jesus. It is indeed true that the Lord Jesus Christ is the *spirit* of scripture, and how wonderfully *all* scripture speaks of Him. The knowledge of this will make us wise. In Proverbs 23 there are four things we are exhorted to buy and not to sell: truth, wisdom, instruction and understanding. One feels how appropriate this injunction is with regard to the holy scriptures, for surely they are the embodiment of those four things. May they become ours through soul exercise, and may we recognise that they are to be held through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Next we are told that *all* scripture is given by inspiration of God. Do we believe this? Do we accept this statement without *any* reservations? Do we receive it as written by the Holy Spirit and therefore

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absolutely the truth? How the Lord, when here, quoted them as holy writings to be accepted without cavil, is seen by Luke 24, where in verse 27 we read, "And beginning at Moses and *all* the prophets, he expounded unto them in *all* the scriptures the things concerning himself"; and again in verse 44, "That all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." Then in 2 Peter 3. 15, 16 we find that Peter accepts the writings of Paul as part of the scriptures, saying, "Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the OTHER scriptures, unto their own destruction." May we ever cleave to the holy scriptures as given by inspiration of God, and that therefore every word of them is *living*.

Then they are spoken of as being profitable for four purposes: doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction. How necessary it is to be established in doctrine and to be brought under the influence of teaching that is according to God. There is an encouraging word in Deuteronomy 32. 2: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew." How refreshing for the heart to fall back upon that which is profitable for doctrine and for it to become light in our souls, so that things presented to our hearts in the way of doctrine are joyfully accepted as teaching that is of God. Even as the rain and the dew *descends*, so we know that

doctrine that is pure must also come down abundantly and flow down from its source.

“For reproof.” This is very necessary. It is that which carries the conscience in way of conviction. The word is also used in Hebrews 11. 1, where it says, “Faith is the evidence [or conviction] of things not seen.” Has the word of God appealed to us as having been given for conviction? Here only can we have *settled* convictions, for the scriptures *never* alter, never change, and are *always* that which they claim to be—the inspired word of God.

“For correction.” There is nothing like the scriptures for adjusting our thoughts: our thoughts as to God, as to Christ, as to the world, as to ourselves. The word of God comes in here setting things aright in our minds and thoughts. Have we allowed such an adjustment?

Then it says, “for instruction in righteousness.” The thought of righteousness is very simple, it is that which is right—right according to God. It is the antithesis of lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. There is that which is right, that which is of God, and the lawless one refuses to submit to the righteousness of God. We receive instruction in righteousness in four ways. It may be by way of chastening. We should all recognise that we are in the school of God and therefore under training or instruction. This thought is unfolded in Hebrews 12, where we are exhorted not to despise the chastening of the Lord, and at the same time we are assured “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” Then there is also the thought of chastisement, and how often God has to take us in hand as His sons in order that we may receive instruction. The thought of being nurtured

in divine things also comes in and also the thought of instruction. May we be marked by submission to the will of God so that in His school we may, as Proverbs puts it, hear the instruction of a father and attend to know understanding in the assurance of heart that He will give good doctrine.

All this, as the last verse of our chapter shews, is "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." *Fully fitted*. What a wonderful thought! The man of God needs first to be fully fitted by God before he is ready to be used for the work of God. It is thought that Timothy was at Ephesus when this epistle was written by the prisoner of the Lord at Rome, and Ephesus was where the whole counsel of God had been declared, that which would form and mould men of God. We need to be good Ephesians if we are to come out and hold the ground here as men of God.

J. R. T.

ENCIRCLED.

(ACTS 13. 1-4; 14. 8-10, 19-22.)

PROPHETS and teachers at Antioch are here seen ministering to the Lord and fasting. From such a centre by divine command Saul is separated, with Barnabas, for the work unto which the Lord had called them. The Holy Spirit *sent* them forth; the prophets and teachers *let them go* after identifying themselves with them by laying on of hands. Saul (who also is called Paul) is filled with the Holy Spirit. He goes forth upheld by prayer from a company in reproach, for "the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch," a name held in contempt, and subject to contumely and hatred; but love encircled him!

The apostle's heart went out to a wide and ever-widening circle: Paphos, Perga, Antioch and Pisidia. He went, one might say, "on circuit." He had done his utmost to eradicate the followers of that "name"—that "way"—now he would be set to establish those who loved it!

In chapter 14 he sees a man at Lystra impotent in his feet, who had never walked. He fixes his eyes on him. He perceives that he has faith, and, in faith in that name himself, he commands him: "Rise up straight upon thy feet." His ministry, beloved, is to put us on our feet, that we may be "rooted and grounded in love," that we might not only "spring up straight" but walk too. His spiritual eyesight took account of things, for "the spiritual discerneth all things." The one who had never walked on earth is now brought within a circle wherein he is empowered to "rise up and walk." He had never walked before. Now he "springs." He is divinely energised.

The apostle had fled to Lystra from Iconium, an assault having been intended to be made on him in opposition to the blessed witness the Lord gave to His beloved servant's "speaking," He giving signs and wonders by their hands; but the apostle is "confiding in the Lord."

The servant is sent out from the centre—the assembly at Antioch—he in spirit is kept in touch with that centre, for he returns eventually to it in the spirit of "encircling." *He* is "encircled," as it were; that is, the Holy Spirit separates him, continues with him in power, and brings him triumphantly through every trial, and when, as at Lystra, he was stoned and left for dead, the disciples are found "encircling him"! Love surrounds him, and hate cannot now

break through to harm him. The man who essays to establish the saints, and to put them on their feet spiritually, faces death! No kind of artifice or hatred can be found cruel enough to resist and crush the devoted servant of Christ! But in figure he appears here as a resurrected man: "he rose up"! How wonderfully the Lord protected His beloved servant! There is no time *needed* to recover from his awful stoning. At once "he rose up" whilst encircled by the beloved, faithful few. A wonderful testimony to the Lord's power and love for His own. "It is Christ who gives me power." A material and moral miracle was thus wrought in the presence of the disciples whilst surrounding him. Beloved, what a wonderful thing to witness: one thus supplied and supported by divine grace and energy to be enabled to go forth "the next day," undeterred by the malice and hatred of the enemy, to again preach in another city! To me to live *Christ*! and again to set out "establishing the souls of the disciples." What a marvellous thing, too, to behold a man testifying that it is "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God," he (having been left for dead) being yet alive to lead them on in the truth, and but only just delivered from so great a death—yet still so blessedly enabled, immediately, to exhort his brethren in this living way!

The "encircling company" of disciples had stood with him, and to-day, through grace, there will be an encircling company here morally in accord with the apostle's teaching right to the end. It is a company of disciples, followers, who seek to be *encircling* in the arms of faith and embracing the truth in the love of it, and, contrariwise, *outcircling* (if we may coin

THE HOUSE AT BETHANY.

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a word) all that is false by the love known only in the assembly, holding them true to the Head.

The apostle returned to Antioch, shewing thereby how all-embracing and all-enduring, too, was his love ; "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" ! On arrival he "related to them all that God had done with them . . . and they stayed no little time with the disciples." What ministering to the Lord and what feasting, too, would such an occasion afford ! May we realise the blessedness of such a sample of "encircling" love known among the saints, His brethren, for love is of God !

R. E.

THE HOUSE AT BETHANY.

(JOHN 11, 12, 1-9.)

WE have seen that the Lord Jesus had three friends at Bethany that were very dear to Him, for we read : "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Yet sickness and death were permitted to enter that household, notwithstanding the fact that they had a Friend who had power over death. Then the sisters sent a touching message to Jesus, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."

We might suppose that on receipt of such a message Jesus would have gone at once to relieve their distress and cure the sick one, but He had something more important before His heart, and that was the glory of God. There may often be circumstances in our lives the reason of which we cannot understand, but the great thing is to trust His love when we cannot trace His hand.

The Lord told His disciples about it by saying,

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," but they did not gather the meaning of His words until He said plainly, "Lazarus is dead." Then the Lord adds, "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe."

When Jesus and His disciples drew near to Bethany, Martha heard of it and went to meet them, and the first words she spoke were, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." I do not know if Martha knew the great truth underlying the words she uttered, but the fact remains that there could be no death in the Lord's presence, and that is why He stayed away that death might come in, and then He as the resurrection and the life could come and banish death.

Mary follows and uses the very same words as Martha. Surely both were led of the Spirit in what they said.

Then when all had come to the sepulchre we find Jesus was troubled in spirit, and "Jesus wept"—wondrous truth! He who was Son of God could gauge as none other the awful character of death, the result of man's sin, yet as a perfect Man could weep in sympathy with those most affected by it.

Then we hear the words of authority, "Lazarus, come forth," and, to the amazement of those standing round, Lazarus came forth.

The result of this act of divine power was that many of the Jews believed on Him, while others went off to the Pharisees to report what they had seen.

Lazarus had now become a resurrection man, and his sisters would value him as never before, and how their hearts would go out to the Lord with a deepening sense of all His greatness and all His love.

Do we know the Lord Jesus as One who is above every circumstance of our lives, and can feel everything that we feel ? Because He has been a Man here upon earth, He can sympathise and succour in every sorrow or difficulty.

The next thing we read about this household is that six days before the passover the Lord came again to Bethany and "there they made him a supper." What a privilege this for Lazarus and his two sisters, to be able to minister to the One to whom they owed so much. And it tells us the part that each took at the supper. Martha served and Lazarus sat at the table with Him, but Mary took a pound of costly spikenard and anointed His feet, and the house was filled with the odour.

It is a blessed thing to serve the Lord, for we read, "Him shall my Father honour," and a great privilege to sit down in His company, but do we know anything about the part that Mary took ? She brought a pound of precious spikenard. The language of her heart was, Nothing can be too costly to be lavished upon Him. She anointed the feet of Jesus, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

The Lord accepted it as an expression of her heart's affection, and while some condemned the action, the Lord commended it, and notice that the house was filled with the odour of the ointment, so that others shared the enjoyment of the perfume. Is it not always thus that if our hearts are full of Christ, and going out in affection to Him, not only will He approve, but others will be unconsciously drawn into the same blessing.

J. M.

"THY GENTLENESS HATH MADE ME GREAT."

(PSA. 18. 35 ; 2 COR. 10. 1.)

"**T**HY gentleness hath made me great,"
Lord, gratefully, I said,
When loved and sought, when found and brought,
Kissed, robed, and shod, and fed :
Yes, then I felt, I said—
Such love, Lord, who can estimate ?
"Thy gentleness hath made me great."

"Thy gentleness hath made me great,"
Lord, still, yes still, I say ;
As oft I trace Thy patient grace
Shewn to me every day ;
Yes, still I love to say,
Whilst countless mercies on me wait—
"Thy gentleness hath made me great."

"Thy gentleness hath made me great,"
Lord, this shall be above ;
'Mid radiant spheres, thro' rapturous years,
Heaven's melody of love ;
Yes, still I'll tell above,
The secret of my blest estate—
"Thy gentleness hath made me great."

"Thy gentleness hath made me great,"
Lord, since I this confess,
May others see whilst here in me
That same sweet gentleness :
May lip and life confess—
May both combine here to relate
"Thy gentleness hath made me great."

S. J. B. C.

THE CROSS IN PHILIPPIANS.

THIS epistle gives us what is proper christian experience, though not the experience necessarily of Christians, for that varies largely according to the

way in which the gospel comes to us—what kind of gospel we receive and our measure of response to it. Paul's gospel received in power in the soul would bring about proper christian experience.

One of the features of this epistle is the frequent use of the personal pronoun, indicating that what is taught is true of the writer if not true to those to whom it is written. The assembly at Philippi was like a box of precious ointment, fragrant with Christ, but by some means a dead fly was in it. "Dead flies," we are told in Ecclesiastes 10. 1, "cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in REPUTATION for wisdom and honour." The apostle with the care of an elder and eye of a priest seeks to remove it that the sweet savour might again arise. How wisely he handles the matter, for he does not touch the vital point till the close of the epistle (see chap. 4. 2), but approaches it through the lovely avenue of "the mind of Christ," so evident in the apostle himself.

In chapter 2. 5-8 we get two great steps. The first is in verses 5-7, and the second is in verse 8. The first step is an act of the mind, the second an historical fact. This is illustrated for us in Luke 5. Levi when called left all (this was an act of the mind), rose up and followed Jesus (an historical fact). The moral preceded the historical. It was so with the Lord Jesus, for before He came historically into manhood He took upon Him a bondman's form, taking this place in the likeness of men. This was the act of the mind, but being found in fashion as a Man—this was the historical fact—He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The first step was taken in eternity, the second in

time. He thought it not an object of rapine (namely, to seize) to be on an equality with God, that is, as we understand it, to remain eternally in those invisible conditions of Godhead (see 1 Tim. 1. 17 and 6. 16), but He would come into visibility by becoming MAN for the working out of the divine pleasure. The apostle now says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form, taking his place in the likeness of men." What a mind, a mind to go down in untiring obedience to the will and pleasure of God. For this He would go to the lowest point, even the death of a cross. The questions for us are, Where are we as to this mind? What do we know about it? Why are we so often seeking our own exaltation in some way or other, or wanting to be in REPUTATION for wisdom and honour? This surely is the little folly and the dead fly of Ecclesiastes 10. May we see to it that we quickly judge it as we contemplate that blessed Man.

It cannot be done otherwise than by thinking of Him in His wonderful, constant mind to go down. As in the Godhead He had title to honour, being the SON, but He would leave the condition of invisibility that He might become MAN; and Himself, the only MAN in the universe worthy of honour, surrendered it that He might honour God. He never ceased to be what He ever was because of what He became. As Man He is the pattern of true manhood. Joseph's brethren might say, "We are all true men," but He was the only TRUE MAN. The apostle also brings forward Timothy, Epaphroditus, and himself, too,

and puts all in the scale of his ministry as living witnesses of this blessed truth that he might rightly affect those at Philippi who were contrary to it, and then appeals most affectionately to Euodias and Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord. This is not being of the same mind as one another, but the same mind as was set forth in Christ by coming under His blessed influence; the mind to go down in the presence of others. If we are on this line of obedience to the will and pleasure of God in a world which has been built up on the adverse principle of elation, what fragrance will arise Godward and what testimony manward.

Now in chapter 3. 18 there are those spoken of who are enemies of the cross of Christ, and no doubt strictly speaking that expression could not be applied in its full meaning to a believer who has the Spirit. However, it is possible in a path of self-seeking to go so far morally on that road that it might be called in question, hence our safety lies in quickly judging these seeds of pride and reputation, in the light of Him who made Himself of NO REPUTATION, in their early stages, for in seeking to be in reputation for wisdom and honour I may find myself opposed to the truth of the cross. May the Lord help us all on this line.

F. G. W.

NOTE.

THE words in italics on page 117, line 10, evidently have reference to the heathen mentioned in verse 15, and are therefore misapplied. The writer desires to withdraw the whole paragraph.

A WORD FOR SONS AND DAUGHTERS.

IN Psalm 144. 12 David refers to our sons and daughters, stating his desire for them, and as the record of it is left in God's word for us we may do well to look at it briefly.

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth." The thought of "plants grown up in their youth" seems to imply stability. The sons were not to be mere saplings tossed about and bent in all directions ; as Ephesians 4. 14, 15 puts it : "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

How can this growth be produced ? I think Ephesians 3. 17 answers this question. "Being rooted and grounded in love," and by living in the sunshine of God's love ; that would produce stability and power to live for Him.

But what does the Psalmist desire for the daughters ? This is a remarkable little word. "Our daughters as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace," or as the New Translation puts it, "As corner-columns sculptured after the fashion of a palace."

What is the meaning of the polished corner stones, or the sculptured corner-column ? I remember hearing that question asked at a Bible reading, and the answer given made a great impression upon me. It was this : "I think it is what is mentioned in 1 Peter

3. 4: 'The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of *great price*.' "

The polishing may be a long, tedious process, for it is not done all at once, or the sculpturing is very slow work, for there is a lot of chipping off required to produce what is wanted; but if the end is reached it is worth while, for it is to be after the similitude of a *palace*. That is where the King lives, His home, and for His pleasure. How wonderful to think that the meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of *great price*.

May we who are daughters be ready to lie passive under the hand of the great Polisher, or Sculpturer, for Him to produce the result He is desirous to get from us for His glory—the *meek* and *quiet* spirit which gives such pleasure to God our Father. G. S. V.

BIBLE STUDY AND LENA'S LETTER.

SUBJECT: SACRIFICE.

The term sacrifice suggests to my mind something devoted to God that cannot be recalled.

The death of a victim is indicated as soon as sin entered this scene in the fact that God clothed Adam and Eve with coats of *skins*. Doubtless this instructed them that, on account of death entering as a penalty of their sin, they and their descendants could only approach God by the death of a suitable substitute.

The first sacrifice we read of was offered by Abel, and Hebrews 11. 4 tells us it was offered *by faith*.

Genesis 22 gives a wonderful picture of the attitude of the Father and Son to sacrifice. Read and consider in the light of "They went both of them *together*," "He that spared not his own Son," "He gave himself for us," etc.

Under the law the subject of sacrifice is more fully explained. See Leviticus 17. 11 as one example; find others.

The offerer seems to have been conscious that death, as the judgment of God, was on him, and therefore the sacrifice to be accepted for him by God had to be *killed*.

The sacrifice of bulls and goats had no power in itself to take

away sin, but it was typical of Christ's sacrifice which has for ever put away sin. (See Heb. 9. 26; 10. 4, 12, 26.)

Without faith in the *sacrificial* death of Christ there is *no salvation*. (See Rom. 3. 25; 4. 24, 25; 1 Cor. 15. 1-4.) The Christian is exhorted to present his body a living sacrifice. (See Rom. 12. 1.) Look up and consider also Ephesians 5. 2, Philippians 4. 18, 1 Peter 2. 5, and Hebrews 13. 15.

Write an essay on the subject.

[*Replies to be sent to "LENA," "Leahurst," Glebe Avenue, Enfield, Middlesex.*]

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I am very pleased with your papers on "Circumcision," and those who have an * have really written excellent essays which I have thoroughly enjoyed reading.

I am so glad that you all seem to understand its *moral* significance (because that is what concerns us) and how necessary is "circumcision of the heart" if we are to be able to enter into the present joys of our heavenly inheritance. I need hardly remind you that it is only by the Spirit's power that we can definitely set aside the flesh and live in the Spirit which will produce the walk in the Spirit. (See Gal. 5. 25.)

Please remember my new address—

"Leahurst," Glebe Avenue,
Enfield, Middlesex,

to which I want your papers to be sent in future.

Yours affectionately,
LENA.

SUBJECT: CIRCUMCISION.

Class 1.—Cissy Allison,* Mary Brown,* Elsie Buckley,* Grace Eayrs,* Robert Ireland,* Ruth Musson,* George Palmer,* Grace Pye,* Grace Railton, Mary Railton, Irene Rusling, Ethel Schneider, Albert Tipler,* Freda Watts, Mildred Watson,* Charles Wallace, C. Warner.

Class 2.—Nellie Railton, Edna Sterey, Eleanor Tedbury.

Late for June.—*Class 1.*—Priscilla Walker,* Herbert Walker, Isabella Walker.

Late for July.—*Class 1.*—Grace McPhee.

Late for August.—*Class 2.*—Grace McPhee.

Late for September.—*Class 1.*—Cissy Allison,* Winnie Dunham.*